



UT BEST Man Forum Program

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BEST Man Forum Agenda

Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Time	Event	Room
8:00am – 8:30am	Registration and Breakfast	Atrium/ 404
8:30am – 9:00am	Welcome	404
9:10am – 10:10am	Girls Rule: Boys Are Behind in Education <i>David Rausch, Professor and Director for Learning and Leadership</i>	413A
	Working Man Blues: Men Are Losing Ground in the Labor Market <i>David Miller, Chief Financial Officer</i>	413B
	Dislocated Dads: Fathers Have Lost Their Traditional Role in the Family <i>Charley Deal, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement</i>	413C
	Dwight's Glasses: Black Boys and Men Face Acute Challenges <i>Brian Dickens, Chief Human Resources Officer</i>	403
10:10am – 10:20am	Break	Atrium
10:20am – 11:20am	Class Ceiling: Poor Boys and Men Are Suffering <i>David Rausch, Professor and Director for Learning and Leadership</i>	413A
	Non-Responders: Policies Aren't Helping Boys and Men <i>Mike Fitzgerald, Associate General Counsel</i>	413B
	Making Men: Nature and Nurture Both Matter <i>Kortney Jarman, LMS Administrator and eLearning Consultant</i>	413C
	Progressive Blindness: The Political Left is in Denial <i>Richard Brown, Former Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance</i>	403
11:30am – 1:00pm	Lunch & Keynote <i>Richard Reeves, President of the American Institute for Boys and Men and author of "Dream Hoarders" & "Of Boys and Men"</i>	404

1:10pm – 2:10pm	<p>New Dads: Fatherhood as an Independent Social Institution <i>Dorian McCoy, Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion</i></p> <p>Redshirt the Boys: Boys Need an Extra Year in the Classroom <i>Dave Ndiaye, Director of Student Disability Services</i></p> <p>Men Can HEAL: Getting Men into the Jobs of the Future <i>Will Ploskonka, Human Resources Manager</i></p> <p>Seeing Red: The Political Right Wants to Turn Back the Clock <i>Richard Brown, Former Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance</i></p>	413A 413B 413C 403
2:10pm – 2:30pm	Break	Atrium
2:30pm – 3:30pm	<p>Leadership Panel: What's Next?: Defining the Future of UT Men <i>Dr. John Schmisser, Dr. Brian Dickens, Chief Troy Lane, Dr. John Zomchick, Dr. Herb Byrd III, Dr. Richard Brown</i></p>	404
3:30pm – 4:00pm	Closing Remarks	404

Session descriptions

Girls Rule: Boys Are Behind in Education

David Rausch, Professor and Director for Learning and Leadership

We currently face a huge, unexpected gender gap in education. Fifty years ago, with women 13% behind men in obtaining bachelors' degrees, federal legislation was passed to promote gender equality in education. This educational gender gap cuts across all levels and countries. The gap has unfortunately reversed. On average, girls are a year ahead of boys in reading ability. Girls are more likely to perform better in core subjects such as math, reading, and science. In higher education, women now obtain 57% of the bachelor's degrees in the United States. This session will center discussions around the reversal of the gender gap in education.

Working Man Blues: Men Are Losing Ground in the Labor Market

David Miller, Chief Financial Officer

This session will focus on the status of men in the workforce. Male unemployment has increased due to changes in the economy. Many of the jobs requiring physical strength, such as construction, have fallen to automation. With the decrease of men's participation in higher education, men are lacking the skills to adapt to the new labor market.

Dislocated Dads: Fathers Have Lost Their Traditional Role in the Family

Charley Deal, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement

For years, the role of men being the providers for their families was part of the male identity. Today, in over 40% of U.S. homes, women are now the primary wage earners. With the women's movement, the goal for women was to achieve economic independence from men. As such, roles for women now include care for the family as well as a primary wage-earner. This session will review the changes of family household dynamics as it pertains to roles of men and women.

Dwight's Glasses: Black Boys and Men Face Acute Challenges

Brian Dickens, Chief Human Resources Officer

Certain groups of men face greater disadvantages compared to others. Persistent income inequality and differences in family structure are key factors contributing to the disparity. This session explores the correlation between a man's socioeconomic status and the severity of his challenges.

Class Ceiling: Poor Boys and Men Are Suffering

David Rausch, Professor and Director for Learning and Leadership

The wage gap between men and women has decreased, the gap between highly paid workers and the lower paid workers has increased. Recent statistics show wages of a typical worker are 42% of the high earners. The class wage gap has widened by 12% in recent years. This disparity this session will examine the negative impact this disparity has on the mental and physical health of poor boys and men.

Non-Responders: Policies Aren't Helping Boys and Men

Mike Fitzgerald, Associate General Counsel

Many social policies put in place to address economic inequalities appear to have benefited women, but not men. A program in Michigan that provided college tuition for students increased the number of women completing college degrees by 45% but saw no change for men. These programs appear to impact the lives of lower-income men more disproportionately than men with higher income. This session will explore the negative impact of societal policies for men.

Making Men: Nature and Nurture Both Matter

Kortney Jarman, LMS Administrator and eLearning Consultant

This session will evaluate the biological characteristics of manhood and how they relate to societal perspectives. Male tendencies such as aggression and risk-taking are expressed to be fundamental aspects of male biology. As such, masculinity is often defined by fluid cultural influences, appearing more fragile compared to femininity, stated to often be influenced by biological imperatives.

Progressive Blindness: The Political Left is in Denial

Richard Brown, Former Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

The 2021 White House Gender Policy Council's National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality failed to address issues that apply to boys and men. This appears to be a common theme in gender equality discussions and policies. This session will examine how gender inequalities can work against men as well as women.

New Dads: Fatherhood as an Independent Social Institution

Dorian McCoy, Director of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

In addition to men losing ground in the workplace, men have also lost their historical roles as family providers. This session will examine the theory of reimagining men's roles as fathers and family members.

Seeing Red: The Political Right Wants to Turn Back the Clock

Richard Brown, Former Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance

Political conservatives argue that biological gender differences justify a division of labor between men and women. The proposed solution for plight of men is to restore those traditional gender roles. This session will more closely examine these assertions.

Redshirt the Boys: Boys Need an Extra Year in the Classroom

Dave Ndiaye, Director of Student Disability Services

This session will review the premise that boys should have an extra year of pre-K to prepare emotionally and intellectually for school. Research has shown that boys who delayed entry into elementary school were more successful further on in their education career. The point of the need for more males in education will also be reviewed.

Men Can HEAL: Getting Men into the Jobs of the Future

Will Ploskonka, Human Resources Manager

HEAL: Health, Education, Administration, and Literacy. Women's involvement in HEAL fields has increased 15% due to incentives and systems put in place, while men's involvement in the HEAL fields has decreased 10%. This session will explore how jobs and careers in HEAL fields can benefit men and their families.

Keynote

Richard Reeves, President of the American Institute for Boys and Men and author of *Dream Hoarders* & *Of Boys and Men*



Richard Reeves is President of the American Institute for Boys and Men, an organization with a mission to raise awareness of the problems of boys and men and advocate for effective solutions. His 2022 book, *Of Boys and Men: Why the Modern Male Is Struggling, Why It Matters, and What to Do About It*, was described as a “landmark” in *The New York Times* and named a book of the year by both *The Economist* and *The New Yorker*. He is a non-resident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC, where he previously directed the Future of the Middle-Class Initiative and the Center on Children and Families.

Reeves’ previous roles include director of strategy to the UK’s Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, from 2010–2012; director of the political think tank Demos; principal policy advisor to the UK’s Minister for Welfare Reform; social affairs editor of *The Observer*; and economics correspondent for *The Guardian*. In 2017, *Politico* magazine named him one of the top 50 thinkers in the US. His other books include *Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class Is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why That Is a Problem, and What to Do about It* (2017) as well as *John Stuart Mill: Victorian Firebrand* (2007).

Facilitators & Speakers

Randy Boyd, President of the University of Tennessee System



Randy Boyd has served as UT's 26th president since November of 2018, and serves as the chief executive officer of the statewide university system. The UT System includes campuses in Chattanooga, Pulaski and Martin; the Health Science Center in Memphis; and the Institute of Public Service. Additionally, it includes the flagship campus in Knoxville, which is also comprised of the Space Institute in Tullahoma and the statewide Institute of Agriculture. The UT System also manages Oak Ridge National Laboratory through its UT-Battelle partnership, where Boyd serves as co-chairman.

In 1991, Boyd founded Knoxville-based Radio Systems Corporation, a company that produces over 4,000 pet-related products under the brand names PetSafe, Invisible Fence, ScoopFree and SportDOG. The company employs more than 1,400 people with offices in six countries around the world. Boyd also owns Boyd Sports, LLC, which owns five minor league baseball teams, including the Tennessee Smokies.

In 2007, Boyd began a journey transitioning from entrepreneur and businessman to full-time public servant. Boyd is a founder and chairman of tnAchieves, a nonprofit which has helped send more than 133,000 students to community college free of tuition and fees. This success led then-Governor Bill Haslam to invite him to serve as Special Advisor on Higher Education in 2013. During his tenure, he is credited with being the architect of the Drive to 55 and the Tennessee Promise. In 2015, Gov. Haslam recruited him back to serve as Commissioner of Economic and Community Development. During his tenure, his team recruited 52,000 new jobs and \$9 billion in new investment for the state. He also founded and co-chaired the governor's Rural Task Force and chaired the Governor's Workforce Sub-Cabinet.

Randy and his wife Jenny have dedicated their lives to giving back. In 2018, the couple formed the Boyd Foundation to further promote youth education, mental health, the arts and animal welfare. Among the Foundation's many philanthropic commitments is the Boyd Center for Business and Economic Research and the Boyd Venture Challenge seed grant program for student entrepreneurs, both through the Haslam College of Business at UT Knoxville.

Boyd is the first in his family to graduate from college. He earned a bachelor's degree in business with an emphasis on industrial management from UT Knoxville. He also earned a master's degree in liberal studies with a focus on foreign policy from the University of Oklahoma.

Richard Brown, Former Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance



I provide executive level leadership and oversight for institutional financial planning and stewardship, budgeting, Bursar, Disbursements, Master Planning, capital projects planning and implementation, Auxiliary Services (food services, bookstore, print solutions), Human Resources, Parking and Transportation Services, Purchasing, Campus Police, Safety and Emergency Planning, Risk Management, Information Technology, Office of Equity and Diversity, McKenzie Arena and the Fine Arts center, Facilities Planning and Campus Operations to include custodial, grounds, and preventative maintenance. I provide financial liaison and support to our UC Foundation which has accumulated resources/assets in excess of \$200 million. I serve a key member of the Chancellor's cabinet and assist with institutional accreditation, strategic planning, and community partnerships. I hold a doctorate in education and an MBA. I am also a graduate of Harvard Business School in Advanced Management.

Charley Deal, Vice Chancellor for University of Advancement



Charley Deal serves as the vice chancellor for university advancement. In this role, he oversees all activities related to alumni and donor relations and fundraising. Charley is originally from Hickman County, Tennessee, and is a graduate of UT Martin ('92, '96). He earned his PhD in Learning and Leadership from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga in 2017. Charley resides in Martin, Tennessee, with his wife, Shannon. They have two adult children, Alex and Jessie.

Brian Dickens, Chief Human Resources Officer



Brian Dickens is the chief human resources officer for the University of Tennessee System. In this role, Dickens is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing statewide initiatives that support employee engagement. Areas of administration include system recruitment, employee and organizational development, compensation, inclusion, diversity and engagement, data analytics, reporting, payroll, benefits, and retirement services. He collaborates with UT system, campus and institute leadership, human resources officers and diversity officers. Dickens joined the UT System on Dec. 1, 2019, following a national search. Dickens earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Prairie View A&M University in 1994, a Master of Arts in Counseling from Prairie View A&M University in 1995 and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Human Resource Development from Texas A&M University in 2015.

Mike Fitzgerald, Associate General Counsel



Mike Fitzgerald received a B.A. in communication from Wake Forest University and a J.D. from the University of Tennessee College of Law, where he was editor-in-chief of the Tennessee Law Review. Fitzgerald came to the University from the Memphis office of Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens and Cannada, where he worked in the labor and employment section. Fitzgerald advises and provides training in employment law matters - particularly the FMLA (family medical leave), FLSA (wage and hour) and ADA (disabilities). Mike handles employment litigation in all forums - state and federal courts, and the Tennessee Claims Commission, and advises on various University matters, including Athletics.

Kortney Jarman, LMS Administrator and eLearning Consultant



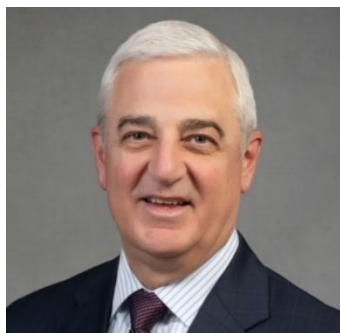
Kortney joined Employee and Organizational Development in February 2022. Prior to joining the EOD, he served the UTK Campus for 20 years in various roles, first as a Computer Support Specialist for the Haslam College of Business, an IT Specialist and Systems Admin for the Center for Career Development, and a Learning Technology Specialist for the Instructional Support and Training team in the Office of Information Technology. Kortney has a diverse background in technology support and training and strives to use technology as a tool for growth, collaboration and development. He has a passion for learning and providing learning opportunities. His focus is to provide employee development and compliance training initiatives via the K&TE learning management system for statewide internal employees, UT departments and campuses. He advises on eLearning best practices that adhere to high quality standards and aids in training and support for campus learning administrators. Kortney holds a bachelor's degree in Statistics from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Dorian McCoy, Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion



Dorian L. McCoy serves as the UT Knoxville College of Education, Health, and Human Sciences' (CEHHS) Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. He is also an associate professor in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. As part of his responsibilities, Dorian implements the college's diversity action plan, fostering an inclusive college environment for students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Dorian has worked at the University of Florida, Louisiana State University and A&M College, and the University of Vermont. He has administrative experience in student life and human resources. He frames his research in critical race theory, social reproduction theory and community cultural wealth. Dorian earned a Bachelor of Business Administration from Henderson State University (Arkadelphia, AR); a Master of Education from the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville; and a PhD in Educational Leadership and Research from Louisiana State University and A&M College.

David Miller, Chief Financial Officer



David L. Miller joined the UT System in January 2017 and is the Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer. He is responsible for financial operations statewide, including developing financial and operational strategies and metrics. As a board-elected officer he assists the President in the management of the University system and other specific duties prescribed by the Board of Trustees. The Office of the SVP & CFO includes the treasurer, controller, financial administration, investment management, information technology, human resources, and capital projects. Miller joined the University of Tennessee System following 20 years of service in the University of Wisconsin System. Miller began his professional career in Washington, DC in law, government, and public education. Miller graduated from East Tennessee State University with a bachelor's degree in political science in 1984. He also earned a Master of Business Administration degree from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. He resides in Knoxville with his wife Nancy and two daughters.

Dave Ndiaye, Director of Student Disability Services



David Ndiaye (pronounced "Jie") joined the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, in 2008 and currently serves as the Director of Student Disability Services. In this role, David oversees the overall function of the department and collaborates with other units to ensure equitable access to the university's experience for students with disabilities. He began his career as a graduate assistant, coordinating testing accommodations for registered students with disabilities. After spending some time in the private sector, he returned to higher education to serve students. He has over 15 years of experience in higher education and has been involved in several initiatives to enhance student success and promote disability-inclusive diversity.

Will Ploskonka, Human Resources Manager



Will Ploskonka is the Learning and Organizational Development Manager for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Will joined the Big Orange family in February 2019. Will has over 30 years of experience in strategically hiring, developing and retaining leaders and staff. The focus of Will's time in Organizational Development has been on leadership development, employee engagement, and content presentation / facilitation. Will is a Certified Organization Development Professional (Institute for Organization Development), a Certified Executive Coaching Professional (Institute for Organization Development), and an awarded facilitator. Will holds a bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University and is highly motivated and driven to impact formal and informal leaders at all levels within organizational structures.

David Rausch, Professor and Director for Learning and Leadership

David Rausch serves as the Associate Dean for the College of Health, Education, and Professional Studies and as Professor and Director for the Learning and Leadership programs at UT Chattanooga. In both these roles, he engages with faculty, staff, and students in the ongoing effort to provide high-quality learning, leadership, and professional practice opportunities. He earned his PhD in Leadership from Andrews University and his MBA from Samford University. Prior to his academic career, he served in a number of senior positions in publicly and privately held companies in the US, the Philippines, Indonesia, Hong Kong, South Africa, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore. Specific industry competencies include financial services (banking & insurance), advertising, higher education, and wholesale distribution. He is a US Navy veteran.

Panelists

Richard Brown, Former Executive Vice Chancellor for Administration and Finance



I provide executive level leadership and oversight for institutional financial planning and stewardship, budgeting, Bursar, Disbursements, Master Planning, capital projects planning and implementation, Auxiliary Services (food services, bookstore, print solutions), Human Resources, Parking and Transportation Services, Purchasing, Campus Police, Safety and Emergency Planning, Risk Management, Information Technology, Office of Equity and Diversity, McKenzie Arena and the Fine Arts center, Facilities Planning and Campus Operations to include custodial, grounds, and preventative maintenance. I provide financial liaison and support to our UC Foundation which has accumulated resources/assets in excess of \$200 million. I serve a key member of the Chancellor's cabinet and assist with institutional accreditation, strategic planning, and community partnerships. I hold a doctorate in education and an MBA. I am also a graduate of Harvard Business School in Advanced Management.

Herb Byrd III, Vice President



Dr. Herb Byrd, III, Vice President of Public Service, University of Tennessee Institute for Public Service (IPS), received his bachelor's degree in animal science, master's degree in Reproductive Physiology and PhD in Educational Administration and Policy Studies, all from The University of Tennessee. Most of his professional career has been spent with his alma mater: 30 years in the UT Institute of Agriculture and with IPS since August 2014. This has been a time of substantial growth for the Institute as number of employees has more than doubled, revenues have almost doubled and the same is true for customer reach and customer reported economic impact to date. Byrd's UT career began as a 4-H Extension Agent in Monroe County and progressed to Adult Agriculture & Resource Development agent and county director in McMinn County. In a two-year stint away from UT, Herb was a Vice President with Lads to Leaders, Inc. where he conducted workshops teaching adults how to teach leadership skills to youth. After returning to UT Extension's state office in 1998, Byrd's responsibilities included full-service human resources duties, directing the newly created Extension Evaluation and Staff Development department, working as the UTIA Human Resources Officer, and Equity and Diversity representative for the Institute for Agriculture. He served on the staff of the University of Tennessee's Leadership Institute for over 20 years. Byrd values service. He is the current board chair of Pathway Lending, LLC, and board chair of the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE). Byrd is active in his local church and serves as board president of Teenage Christian Camp. He has worked with medical mission teams in several South and Central American countries with Latin American missions where he gained greater perspective on life, family, country, and culture. His best days are spent with his wife Resa, three daughters and six grandchildren.

Brian Dickens, Chief Human Resources Officer, Moderator



Brian Dickens is the chief human resources officer for the University of Tennessee System. In this role, Dickens is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing statewide initiatives that support employee engagement. Areas of administration include system recruitment, employee and organizational development, compensation, inclusion, diversity and engagement, data analytics, reporting, payroll, benefits, and retirement services. The office also works to ensure compliance with federal, state and University labor standards and policies. He collaborates with UT system, campus and institute leadership, human resources officers and diversity officers.

Dickens joined the UT System on Dec. 1, 2019, following a national search.

Troy Lane, Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Safety



Troy Lane served four years with the U.S. Army as a Military Police Team Leader and served in Operation Desert Storm. He began his civilian law enforcement career in 1991 as a Police Officer with the Salina, Kansas Police Department. In 1996 he moved to the Kansas State University Police Department. While there, he worked in all facets of the department, as a Patrolman, Patrol Supervisor (Sergeant), Investigator, Support Services Commander (Captain), and finally as the Assistant Chief, in charge of day-to-day operations of the department. In May 2007 he was selected as the Chief of Police for the University of Wyoming Police Department. In June of 2012, he was

appointed Chief of Police at the University of Tennessee Police Department. In January of 2016, he was appointed to the dual role of Associate Vice Chancellor for Public Safety and Chief of Police. He holds a bachelor's degree in management and a master's in criminal justice. He is a graduate of the 212th Session of the FBI National Academy, the 80th session of the Police Executive Research Forum's Senior Management Institute for Police, FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Seminar (LEEDS), and numerous other specialty schools. He holds instructor level certifications in Police Ethics, Firearms, Less Lethal Force, National Incident Management System and Incident Command System (NIMS/ICS), and the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). He has taught Criminal Justice courses for the University of Wyoming, Upper Iowa University, and Fort Hays State University. He is a Past Vice President of the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police where he served on the Legislative Liaison and Amber Alert committees. In 2010 he was selected by the Governor of Wyoming to serve as a Commissioner for the Wyoming Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (POST), and in 2011 he was selected by the Governor of Wyoming as a Court Security Commissioner. He is a current member of FBI National Academy Associates (FBINAA), FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association (FBI LEEDA), Police Executive Research Forum, International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Tennessee Association of Chiefs of Police (where he served as President from 2020-2021), and the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA), where he is a past Board Member.

John Schmisser, Executive Director



Dr. John D. Schmisser became the Executive Director of the University of Tennessee Space Institute in August 2022. Prior to his appointment, he served as the H.H. Arnold Chair and B.H. Goethert Professor in the University of Tennessee Knoxville Department of Mechanical, Aerospace, and Biomedical Engineering since 2014, during which time he taught and led research at the University of Tennessee Space Institute. Prior to joining the faculty, John was the Chief of the Energy, Power & Propulsion Sciences Division and Program Manager for Aerothermodynamics within the Air Force Office of Scientific Research (AFOSR). During his tenure at AFOSR, John initiated and led a national strategic research plan which has guided the research efforts of multiple federal agencies and championed the transition of basic research capabilities that have advanced flagship national hypersonics technology programs and transformed test and evaluation capabilities. Dr. Schmisser earned his B.S. (90) and M.S. (92) in Aerospace Engineering from the University of Texas at Austin and his Ph.D. (97) in Aeronautics and Astronautics from Purdue University. He is a Fellow of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (2012) and the Air Force Research Laboratory (2013) and is the 2008 recipient of the Air Force Science and Engineering Award in Research Management.

John Zomchick, Provost and Sr. Vice Chancellor



John Zomchick has served since 2020 as provost of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the state's flagship university. In this role, he works with the deans, vice provosts, department chairs, faculty, and staff to support excellence in all of the university's academic, research, scholarly, and creative programs and activities. John Zomchick most recently served as vice provost for faculty affairs, a position he held for more than five years. He also served as interim provost and senior vice chancellor from August 2016 until April 2018. Before joining the Office of the Provost's staff, he served as executive associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. A professor of English, Zomchick came to UT in 1985. He is a scholar of eighteenth-century English literature. During his time at UT, Zomchick has held a number of administrative appointments, including associate dean for academic personnel and interim associate dean for academic programs in the College of Arts and Sciences and head of the Department of English. Zomchick has a bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania State University and a master's and doctorate in English literature from Columbia University. He is a recipient of the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend, the UT National Alumni Association Distinguished Teaching Award, the College of Arts and Sciences Award for Student Advising, and the Lorayne W. Lester Award in recognition of contributions to the College of Arts and Sciences. He served a three-year term on the executive committee of the Association of Departments of English.

Room Hosts

Adam Brimer, Director of Technology-Enhanced Education



Adam Brimer is the Director of Technology-Enhanced Education for the Haslam College of Business. Prior to his current role, Adam produced instructional videos for OIT and marketing and promotional videos for the Offices of Communications and Marketing for both the UT Knoxville campus and UT System. He has worked for the university for over 10 years and is currently completing a PhD in Higher Education Administration through UT Knoxville's College of Education, Health, & Human Sciences. An East TN native, Adam grew up in Morristown and lives in Fountain City with his wife, Kate, and 7-year-old daughter where he likes to run and bike.

Lamar Bryant, Associate Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives



Lamar Bryant is a true scholar practitioner at heart, who currently serves as the associate vice chancellor for strategic initiatives in the division of diversity and engagement at UTK. In this role, Lamar works alongside a dedicated team who strives to make Rocky Top feel like Home Sweet Home to everyone in the campus community. With over 13 years of professional experience in higher education, Lamar knows the direct correlation between mattering & belonging, and stellar student, staff and faculty retention rates. Lamar has worked at various institution types, and he has experience in several functional areas of higher education. Throughout his professional career, Lamar has remained committed to advancing diversity work, regardless of his position and title. Furthermore, with over 13 years of professional experience in higher education, Lamar knows the direct correlation between mattering & belonging, and excellent student, staff, and faculty retention rates. Lamar also serves as an adjunct faculty member in the College Student Personnel master's program at UTK. In addition to his extensive higher education experience, Lamar is a public speaker and facilitator, specializing in leadership, diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and sorority & fraternity life. Lamar holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a minor in Marketing, and a Master of Arts in College Student Personnel from Northwestern State University. He also earned his Doctor of Philosophy in Higher Education with a Sociology cognate from the University of North Texas. Outside of work Lamar enjoys spending time with friends and family, and he is an avid sports fan. Lamar also enjoys going on hikes and exploring the great outdoors, Lamar is happily married to his better half/college sweetheart, Mrs. Kattina Bryant.

Justin Haynes, Compensation Analyst



Commencing his tenure as an intern with Pilot Flying J in the year 2016, Justin Haynes has advanced through a series of progressively more responsible positions within the same organization. En route, Justin actively participated in the formulation of policies and strategies, assumed oversight of HR operations, implemented performance metrics, and aligned pivotal business functions with overarching organizational objectives. As a result, Justin has acquired a comprehensive understanding of HR best practices, federal and state legislation, as well as the handling of sensitive and confidential information. Throughout the trajectory of his career, Justin has collaboratively engaged with stakeholders across all echelons of the company, addressing a diverse spectrum of matters including U.S. and Canadian compensation, HRIS systems, talent acquisition, foreign labor, and transition management. Justin's proficiencies encompass not only the interpretation of policies and procedures, but also encompass auxiliary responsibilities within employee relations, such as performance evaluations, benefits administration, training facilitation, and documentation management. Justin's ongoing contributions to The University of TN System HR team's operational efficiency are substantiated by data-informed analysis and enterprise-wide process enhancement initiatives. Furthermore, he possesses a postgraduate degree in HR Management from the University of Tennessee and maintains active affiliations with respected professional bodies including SHRM, and World@Work. Beyond his corporate and university responsibilities, Justin has concurrently served as a music director at his church since 2007. In this capacity, he has overseen both personnel and volunteers, providing meticulous direction and supervision that necessitates adept budgetary planning, recruitment, hiring, and project management.

Will Ploskonka, Human Resources Manager



Will Ploskonka is the Learning and Organizational Development Manager for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Will joined the Big Orange family in February 2019. Will has over 30 years of experience in strategically hiring, developing, and retaining leaders and staff. The focus of Will's time in Organizational Development has been on leadership development, employee engagement, and content presentation / facilitation. Will is a Certified Organization Development Professional (Institute for Organization Development), a Certified Executive Coaching Professional (Institute for Organization Development), and an awarded facilitator. Will holds a bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University, is highly motivated, and driven to impact formal and informal leaders at all levels within organizational structures.

Registration Hosts

Garrett Morton, Retirement Benefit Specialist



I am a UTK alumnus and a lifelong Tennessee fan. I graduated from the College of Agriculture in 2018 with a degree in Agricultural Resource Economics. Since that time, I have worked as a certified tax preparer for Jackson Hewitt and as a Human Resources Associate for Worley Energy, Chemicals, & Resources. I returned to the University in my current role as a Retirement Benefit Specialist in July. I am excited to be contributing to UT's mission of serving all Tennesseans and beyond through education, discovery and outreach that enables strong economic, social and environmental well-being.

Rob Chance, Payroll, Benefits, and Retirement



I started in the Controller's Office in 1992, and moved to payroll, benefits and retirement in 1995. As the child of a UTK professor, I grew up around the UT System and love supporting the university's mission of educating college students. I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1989 and a Master of Accountancy degree from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 1991.

Jeremy Smith, Business Analyst



Jeremy Smith has worked for the University of Tennessee almost 5 years, currently as a Business Analyst with UT System Department of Technology Solutions. Jeremy has a background in Human Resources and staffing along with experience working with Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS), Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS), and cloud-based software. Jeremy received his Bachelor and Master of Business Administration from East Tennessee State University. Jeremy is an East Tennessee native who enjoys spending time outdoors with his wife and various pets, traveling or just enjoying a good movie/tv show.

Brian Todd, Senior Coordinator, International Student and Scholar Services

Brian Todd serves as Senior Coordinator, International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) in the UT-Knoxville Center for Global Engagement. ISSS helps international students at UTK navigate F and J visa processes, adjust to the campus culture, and pursue opportunities as Vol alums. As a member of the ISSS team, Brian provides immigration compliance support as well as training and advisement to campus stakeholders. Brian has 25 years of experience in higher education, including 18 years in international admissions and immigration advising at Pellissippi State, Maryville College, and the University of Tennessee. Brian currently provides immigration advising to many international undergraduate and graduate students, including international student athletes. Beyond UT, Brian has served with the Navigators International Student Ministry, Boy Scouts of America (now Scouts BSA), and as a volunteer cross country coach at Emerald Academy and Berean Christian School.

Brian Watkins, Leadership Development Consultant

Brian Watkins serves as the Leadership Development Consultant for the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Prior to joining the UTK HR team in May 2022, Brian served as the Human Resources and Human Capital Director at Tennessee Schools for the Deaf. Brian earned his Professional Training Facilitator for Advance Management Practices from the Tennessee Department of Human Resources in 2015 and has facilitated leadership workshops for multiple state agencies in East Tennessee. Brian holds a bachelor's in business administration (BBA) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) from Tusculum University.

Tech Support

Travis Gordon, IT Manager



Travis Gordon is an IT Manager for the Office of Innovative Technologies (OIT) at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He oversees the HelpDesk, Campus Information Services, and IT Service Management. Travis joined OIT in August 2005 as a student assistant and became a full-time staff member in August 2007. On his journey to the manager position, he worked for the HelpDesk and Student Computer Support services as a technician. Travis also serves as the primary administrator for the TeamDynamix IT Service Management system. In this role, he designs and implements service request processes and workflows for OIT and many other departments across campus. Travis holds a Bachelor of Science in

Marketing and Statistics from the University of Tennessee College of Business, which he obtained in December of 2006.

Andrew Owens, IT Technician



I have had the pleasure of supporting UTSA since April 2022. I am enjoying my role as an IT Technician while I get the pleasure of supporting the lovely people at UT Tower. I am finishing my Undergraduate degree in Information Science at UTK. I plan to graduate in spring and return for a master's degree. I have a large Lego collection as seen on my desk and taking over my apartment. I enjoy anything outdoors, hiking, running, kayaking, biking, and more. I am currently learning to play the piano in my free time. I like reading all kinds of books from humor to professional development. My background is in running sound systems, lighting equipment, and live streaming. I also had the

pleasure of working with the Min Kao Collaboration studio to learn about 3D printing, laser cutters, and other machining tools. I enjoy learning all types of skills and hobbies and I am always looking for something new.

Employee and Organizational Development

Sarah Crichton, Learning Consultant



Sarah joined Employee and Organizational Development in January 2022 as the Learning and Development Coordinator. In August 2022, she transitioned to her current role as Learning Consultant and Business Partner. Sarah is a dedicated professional with a passion for learning, leadership, and development. As Learning Consultant and Business Partner, Sarah's mission is to provide system-wide consulting, assistance, and support for designing and implementing synchronous and asynchronous learning. She is responsible for event planning for major conferences, certificate programs, and the UT Leadership Institute, as well as providing support for in-person and online learning opportunities. With her unwavering passion, educational pursuits, and ambition, Sarah is committed to driving educational excellence and fostering inclusive learning opportunities. Sarah holds a B.S. in Business Administration with an emphasis on Human Resource Management and International Business from the University of Tennessee. Currently, Sarah is pursuing her M.S. in Educational Psychology with an emphasis on Adult Education, also from the University of Tennessee.

Kortney Jarman, LMS Administrator and eLearning Consultant



Kortney joined Employee and Organizational Development in February 2022. Prior to joining the EOD, he served the UTK Campus for 20 years in various roles, first as a Computer Support Specialist for the Haslam College of Business, an IT Specialist and Systems Admin for the Center for Career Development, and a Learning Technology Specialist for the Instructional Support and Training team in the Office of Information Technology. Kortney has a diverse background in technology support and training and strives to use technology as a tool for growth, collaboration, and development. He has a passion for learning and providing learning opportunities. His focus is to provide employee development and compliance training initiatives via the K@TE learning management system for statewide internal employees, UT departments and campuses. He advises on eLearning best practices that adhere to high quality standards and aids in training and support for campus learning administrators. Kortney holds a bachelor's degree in Statistics from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Izetta Slade, Executive Director



Izetta is currently the Executive Director for Employee and Organizational Development with University of Tennessee (UT) System Human Resources. Immediately preceding her move to UT System HR she served as Executive Director of Human Resources at UT Knoxville. Other positions held at UT include Associate Director for Equity and Diversity, Interim Department Head for UT Extension Evaluation and Staff Development, Interim Human Resource Officer for UT Institute of Agriculture, and Training Program Manager at the Institute for Public Service. Izetta has over 20 years of work experience with higher education institutions. She also has experience in working with business, non-profit, and local, county, and state government agencies to provide human resources, customer service, strategic planning, program facilitation, event planning, leadership coaching and development, performance and organizational consulting, and professional development services. Izetta received her B.S. in Business Administration from the University of South Carolina, her M.S. in Educational Human Resource Development from Texas A&M University, and doctorate in Learning and Leadership through UT, Chattanooga.

Jeannie Tennant, Assistant Director



Jeannie, a dedicated professional, joined Employee and Organizational Development (EOD) in June 2021. Prior to her tenure with EOD, she served the UTK campus as a Learning and Organizational Development Consultant. With a foundation as an educator and coach, Jeannie boasts a diverse background encompassing public education, healthcare, and higher education, all with a strong focus on leadership and staff development, professional coaching, and program facilitation. Her unwavering commitment to lifelong learning is evident in her work, which centers on creating meaningful and rigorous learning opportunities. Jeannie has extensive experience providing inclusive leadership development, strategic planning, differentiated learning, and organizational consulting. She holds a bachelor's degree in Multidisciplinary Studies and Human Learning from Tennessee Technological University and earned her master's degree in leadership and management, further enhancing her expertise and dedication to the field.