Our Vision
A world enriched by the power of ideas, made better through action, and inspired by the Volunteer Spirit of service and leadership.

Our Mission
We are a diverse community with a shared commitment to discovery, creativity, education, and affordability. At UT Knoxville we:
- Empower learners of all ages and backgrounds to achieve their dreams;
- Advance the prosperity, well-being, and vitality of communities across Tennessee and around the world through our research, teaching, service, and engagement; and
- Commit to excellence, equity, and inclusion within the university and in our global engagements.

Goals
1. Provide high-quality educational opportunities for people at every stage of life, whenever and wherever they seek to learn.
2. Create a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future through world-class research, scholarship, and creative work.
3. Develop and sustain a nurturing university culture where diversity and community are enduring sources of strength.
4. Empower and sustain a culture of collaboration, agility, and innovation throughout the university.
5. Connect with every Tennessean and with communities around the world, inspiring future Volunteers to join our diverse community.

Our community works together, collaborating across boundaries and disciplines, to achieve these goals and thus fulfill our mission and vision. Accomplishing each goal will take sustained effort. See the following pages for specific strategies and tactics designed to achieve each goal.

Please note that the next draft of this working document will include specific measures for the mission and goals. In the meantime, those details are still under development.
Goal 1:

Provide high-quality educational opportunities for people at every stage of life, whenever and wherever they seek to learn.

Strategies and Tactics:

- **Transform our land-grant university to support a broad range of communities in Tennessee, the nation, and the world.** Tactics include:
  - Define a reimagined land grant mission that expands its outreach and affordability to educational opportunities beyond agricultural and natural resource sciences to include business, engineering, education, arts, health, and the humanities;
  - Empower our internal and external stakeholders through intentional and systematic listening designed to:
    ▪ Seek shared interests, goals and strategies among stakeholders;
    ▪ Remove administrative, disciplinary, and external partner silos;
    ▪ Build trust among university and community stakeholders; and
    ▪ Encourage calculated risk in working together.
  - Reimagine administrative practices and organizational structures that may limit our innovation:
    ▪ Conduct an audit of administrative policies that impede the creation of novel ideas;
    ▪ Develop fiscally responsible, transparent practices and metrics that align with UTK mission; and
    ▪ Develop metrics to ensure the affordability of our education for a broad range of communities in our state.

- **Understand the curricular and co-curricular community needs of the communities we serve.** Tactics include:
  - Identify student/participant cohorts on and beyond campus based on age, location, and purpose for seeking education/skill/enrichment programming;
  - Identify the populations who have not been represented in educational programs; and
  - Establish systematic “listening” mechanisms to learn from these cohorts and to guide the direction of educational program development.

- **Empower innovation in modalities of learning that are responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.** Tactics include:
  - Promote and support faculty innovation in modalities of learning in their courses and for the potential outreach/engagement initiatives;
  - Ensure professional development for UT Knoxville faculty and staff to support flexibility in developing and offering new educational opportunities;
  - Create a “roadmap” tool that outlines examples of flexible educational modalities to meet the needs of students and the community. Innovative, flexible models may include new academic programs, new educational technologies, and new industry partnerships; and
• Share this roadmap with academic units and co-curricular (Student Life, Enrollment Management, and Student Success) to elicit ideas for potential innovations.

• **Incentivize educational outreach and engagement.** Tactics include:
  o Identify apparent gaps in outreach and engagement and establish goals that incentivize academic and non-academic departments to close those gaps;
  o Identify incentives (e.g., department heads/unit leads annual evaluation, promotion & tenure process, annual evaluations, financial, tuition allocation model) to inspire innovation and engagement in issues of equity and inclusion, cross-campus collaborations, external engagement, and new modalities of learning; and
  o Revise all formal performance reviews to centralize outreach and engagement as a goal.

**Goal 2:**

Create a more just, prosperous, and sustainable future through world-class research, scholarship, and creative work.

**Strategies and Tactics:**

• **Increase the number of transdisciplinary initiatives in all UT academic and outreach units.** Tactics include:
  o Identify “low-hanging fruit” by identifying existing partnerships and in order to scale and diversify them.
  o Explore the creation of new alliances and opportunities for collaboration across campus.
  o Develop an ecosystem of Vol entrepreneurs to provide knowledge, networking, and resources to connect innovation with economic development;
  o Revisit the OneUT Collaboration & Innovation Grant applications, as well as the new OneHealth initiative, for valuable insights regarding the existing potential and interest for collaboration across campus and across the system;
  o Develop processes that promote all-types of collaboration (e.g. interdisciplinary teaching, joint research/grant applications, outreach/engagement opportunities/partnerships) across entities (e.g. systems/processes that make it easier to work with inside and outside entities);
  o Seed early stage research in a variety of disciplines, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary efforts to break down “siloed boundaries” across campus;
  o Expand awareness of and access to resources such as the research development academy, and sustain these supports to ensure consistency. The same would be true for resources that support outreach and engagement and innovations in teaching;
  o Grow opportunities for faculty across disciplines to share ideas and develop joint research, teaching, and engagement activities; and
  o Expand incentives and support to develop larger-scale collaborative proposals.
• Secure and sustain mutually beneficial strategic partnerships with governments, industry, non-profits, and community organizations that strengthen our research, scholarship, creative work, and community engagement impact. Tactics include:
  o Forge long-term collaborations with external companies, organizations, and sponsors at the local, state, national, and international levels; and
  o Look beyond the usual suspects for partnership and collaboration opportunities.

• Provide students at all levels with opportunities to engage in rich learning and scholarship that is collaborative, experiential, and relevant. Tactics include:
  o Create the structures and systems necessary to allow us to develop interdisciplinary majors, portfolio and project-based learning, and contribute the solutions needed to solve society’s complex challenges;
  o Set up intentional and reciprocal collaboration between ORE and Office of Undergraduate Research and the Graduate School to promote faculty/student discovery and creativity (all student groups);
  o Foster partnerships between Undergraduate Research, Student Success, UT LEAD, and other programs to reach underrepresented groups; and
  o Bring student groups into the conversation – mentor them through process of helping us develop the action-steps necessary to execute each of the goals.

• Implement highly engaging means of disseminating the full scope of research and educational impact from UT Knoxville to reach the full range of communities we serve. Tactics include:
  o Scale up strategies and resources (human, financial) in all areas of marketing and communications to increase the number of storytellers, as well as the diversity of storytellers across campus (centers, programs, departments, colleges, and university level);
  o Find ways to “embed storytellers on the front-lines” with the faculty and students working on boundary-pushing discovery and creativity projects;
  o Establish and sustain resources to encourage diverse forms of dissemination to tell the story about UT Knoxville and what makes us unique;
  o Inform our communities in lay terms of research results that directly affect them;
  o Develop recognitions and awards with the common theme of “Courage” – drawing on the chancellor’s investiture speech.

• Create efficient systems and flexible structures that encourage and support innovations in education, research, scholarship, and creative activities. Tactics include:
  o Create comprehensive process maps of key University functions with an explicit goal of identifying wasted time, unnecessary steps, and non-value-added activities; and
  o Create new, flexible, nimble systems (admin, financial) that better allow for an ability to “push the boundaries.” In other words, prioritize “pushing boundaries over pushing paper.”
Goal 3:

Develop and sustain a nurturing university culture where diversity and community are enduring sources of strength.

Strategies and Tactics:

- **Articulate UT Knoxville’s culture and diversity expectations and the structures and practices necessary to bring them to fruition.** Tactics include:
  - Create an equitable and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff that fosters an atmosphere in which every member of the campus community matters and belongs;
  - Invest heavily in the Division of Diversity and Engagement;
  - Welcome and include individuals from minoritized communities;
  - Ensure that UTK’s interests, partnerships, and engagements beyond campus reflect the values of the university.

- **Engage collectively at the division, department, and unit levels to develop and implement diversity action plans that prioritize, foster, and sustain a culture that is welcoming, diverse, and inclusive.** Tactics include:
  - Ensure academic units have an active Diversity & Inclusion team to implement plan and share progress/challenges with the Provost’s office;
  - Acculturate students to our inclusive culture;
  - Proactively engage with students to set standards for the university’s culture and their participation in it;
  - Make engagement with diversity and inclusion central to discussions within every department;
  - Make sure campus life reflects the "Vol means All" mentality;
  - Engage in inter-generational dialogue and consciousness-raising initiatives through University Libraries, First Year Studies, Faculty Senate's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, and the Division for Diversity & Engagement; and
  - Invest more resources into supporting students who are traditionally minoritized and marginalized [i.e. the Office of Multicultural Student Life, the Frieson Black Cultural Center, the Pride Center, etc.].

- **Nurture change to achieve diversity and to demonstrate inclusive behaviors across our administration, faculty and staff.** Tactics include:
  - Listen to and reflect on perceptions and thoughts given in response to work completed;
  - Invest in diversity training opportunities for faculty and staff;
  - Use instructor evaluations to prompt students to rate or comment on whether or not the professor created an inclusive environment in the classroom; too often students comment in person about a certain professor’s lack of respect for students of color but don’t report this in student evaluations;
  - Require annual in-person training for employees that focus on creating welcoming climates;
- Recognize, value, and reward the invisible and emotional labor of traditionally minoritized and marginalized faculty and staff;
- Engage students in courageous conversations about diversity and culture through required coursework and trainings;
- Engage each other in courageous conversations about diversity and culture; include diversity engagement in staff evaluations.

- **Challenge students to examine their understandings of the world and their capacity to act as members of an inclusive community.** Tactics include:
  - Require all students to enroll in a first-year studies or transition courses that highlight relevant intersectional identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and sexuality (Vol Core). This would require updates through curriculum committee and support from faculty to include relevant content in their courses;
  - Students could receive medallions for service hours completed, awards or other recognition for making an impact;
  - Offer scholarships for students to study abroad;
  - Prepare students for a global society by exploring their own and other cultures, and developing awareness of cultural diversity and global issues.

- **Engage alumni and the broader community in conversations about the importance of culture and diversity at today’s UT Knoxville.** Tactics include:
  - Build strong relationships with students from underrepresented populations which will lead to a good, long-lasting relationship with these individuals when they are alumni;
  - Reestablish meaningful communication and connections with alumni from under-represented populations, especially those with whom we have lost a connection; and
  - Make diversity and inclusion efforts an essential component for working with alumni boards and community representatives.

**Goal 4:**

**Empower and sustain a culture of collaboration, agility, and innovation throughout the university.**

**Strategies and Tactics:**

- **Incentivize research, teaching and service projects that meet goals of collaboration, agility and innovation.** Tactics include:
  - Create support for innovation through grants offered for new ideas in teaching, research, and outreach;
  - Allocate funds for interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary hires;
  - Allocate funds to support projects (teaching, scholarship, engagement) that respond quickly to community needs;
  - Offer additional administrative support for faculty with successful projects;
• Offer support to projects that help fulfill the University mission;
• Provide incentives to initiate cross-disciplinary courses and teaching projects;
• Provide resources to create and support academic programs that reach beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries;
• Create ways for faculty to report activities that meet goal 5 in annual review and RPT materials (Elements); and
• Build on and expand existing campus initiatives that cater to entrepreneurship and innovation.

• **Encourage cross-disciplinary dialog within the university and adapt current structures to allow for new efforts outside traditional assignments and silos.** Tactics include:
  o Establish “think tank” opportunities for brainstorming across disciplines to realize possible partnership and collaborations in research, teaching and service;
  o Choose annual topics that bring people together in special interest groups across disciplines and the community. This should include not only research, but also all areas of our work in research, teaching and service;
  o Charge Department Heads with reporting faculty projects to the Office of Research & Engagement that are in search of, or ideal for, collaborative possibilities with faculty across disciplines;
  o Create facilities that cater to innovation and cross-disciplinary exchanges;
  o Remove structural barriers to collaboration and adopt new practices that foster innovation;
  o Engage faculty in the creation of new degrees, certificates, and instructional modalities to update our offerings and curriculum and respond to the evolving demands of the 21st century. Establish new and innovative continuing education opportunities for non-traditional students;
  o Create centrally funded positions devoted to the creation of collaborations;
  o Provide internal seed grants and cost-sharing for collaborative projects;
  o Create an office that focuses on entrepreneurial opportunities for research and education;
  o Support agility by creating flexibility within the university structure and faculty work assignments. Enable faculty with time and space to approach new projects.
  o Allow for failure, but also make provide support to test out ideas, and determine the viability for success before moving forward; and
  o Promote industry partnerships, similar to that with ORNL, to establish active structures for collaboration that dismantle barriers between academia and industry.

• **Strengthen connections and partnerships with communities and businesses across the state and beyond.** Tactics include:
  o Enhance the abilities of extension to be UT’s representative across counties in the state;
  o Strengthen our partnerships with ORNL, Y-12, ORAU, AEDC, and industry throughout the state;
  o Foster collaborations among faculty, staff, administration, and their peers throughout the UT system;
  o Build the infrastructure of relationships including formal partnerships, legislation and establishing university-wide funding sources to support the other goals;
o Forge links with communities and non-profit organizations in areas across the state as part of our experience learning initiatives;

o Foster public access to university expertise and resources;

o Advance a scholarly model of outreach and engagement that stretches across teaching, research, and service;

o Strengthen the work at the UT Research Park;

o Connect university assets and knowledge with the public and private sectors to:
   ▪ Enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity;
   ▪ Enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning;
   ▪ Prepare educated, engaged citizens;
   ▪ Strengthen students’ democratic and civic responsibilities;
   ▪ Address critical societal issues; and
   ▪ Contribute to the public good.

o Leverage expertise in Agricultural Extension to assist with building educational partnerships;

o Leverage the resources of the UT System Office of Research and UT Research Foundation to forge and expand research collaborations;

o Leverage existing successes in UT Extension to deepen community connections and further support the land-grant mission; and

o Establish an office that focuses on finding new external community partners/addressing the needs of the community, and partner them with various university discipline areas.

• **Award and evaluate recognition for innovation and collaboration at all levels.** Tactics include:

  o Create innovation awards to recognize innovative projects or programs that enhance UTK functioning, recognition or visibility;

  o Elevate recognition for service and teaching projects that pursue collaboration at the level of research;

  o Recognize staff or others who help develop better policies and procedures to facilitate our goals;

  o Define equitable evaluation and merits for the results of collaborative efforts;

  o Evaluate administrators for their ability to enhance collaboration, innovation, and agility; and

  o Include ‘collaborations and innovative approaches implemented’ to annual workload assessments.
Goal 5:

Connect with every Tennessean and with communities around the world, inspiring future Volunteers to join our diverse community.

Strategies and Tactics:

- **Unite the university with each Tennessean through our land-grant mission of teaching, research, and outreach.** Tactics include:
  - Utilize the university’s 95 county classrooms (Extension offices) and university faculty, staff, and students to communicate educational opportunities and science-based information to the citizens of Tennessee;
  - Connect staff, faculty, students, and alumni with statewide offices (Extension, IPS, etc.) to help communicate the strengths of university’s land grant mission of teaching, research and outreach;
  - Coordinate existing outreach efforts with the Center for Global Engagement and college international programs to bring the university’s global perspective to the citizens of Tennessee.

- **Reimagine our global engagement efforts.** Tactics include:
  - Establish a Programs Abroad Alumni Special Interest Council in partnership with CGE to support the priorities of the Programs Abroad Office;
  - Connect English Language Institute alumni living abroad virtually with UT exchange students from Kansai Gaidai University to serve as ELI mentors;
  - Highlight UT global research and engagement via an educational webinar series featuring faculty members in partnership with the Global Research Office and the Office of Alumni Affairs;
  - Partner with International Student and Scholar Services to host in-person and virtual Vol to Vol career networking events bringing together international alumni and students.

- **Contribute to the economic vitality of the community, state, region, and nation by connecting people with the power of our ideas.** Tactics include:
  - Lead quality workforce creation and retention through education, connection and innovation;
  - Accelerate the formation and growth of affiliated start-ups through the commercialization of UT intellectual property;
  - Nurture an entrepreneurial culture, and foster an ecosystem of founders, investors, and mentors for student entrepreneurs;
  - Target alumni relationships to help create and strengthen venture partnerships. Identify where alumni are, and where they need to be;
  - Enhance industrial partnership opportunities, and simplify access to expertise, resources and solutions;
  - Support and contribute to the state of Tennessee’s priorities for economic development and workforce growth by connecting with key industry focus areas such as manufacturing, energy, transportation, and others;
Identify alignment areas with federal and state initiatives as defined by strategic missions. This includes areas such as broadband expansion, the opioid crisis, rural communities initiative, food supply, healthcare access, K-12 education, water quality, and sustainability;
Unify communications about partnerships and opportunities in the university community, making it easier for external stakeholders to identify and access expertise, resources, and programs available;
Set a shared vision with partners for future economic growth and stimulate continuous improvement in research and engagement programs;
Strengthen stakeholder engagement and continue to build partnerships between the university and the surrounding community;
Identify and leverage ways in which UT Knoxville can contribute to Knoxville being recognized as an attractive, competitive community—a place where people want to live, create and take jobs, raise their families, participate in civic life, and age and retire.

**Align institutional outreach and messaging efforts to advance the university’s reputation and empower all stakeholders to be ambassadors for UT Knoxville.** Tactics include:
- Create a campus-wide customer service initiative centered around the needs of our students and external stakeholders;
- Invest in campus infrastructure that encourages information sharing across the university and enables better coordination of communication with internal and external audiences;
- Expand existing community engagement programs to more meaningfully support local, statewide, and regional communities, solve problems, and connect to all aspects of the university’s service mission;
- Develop institution-wide communication strategies that enable and empower the people and departments of the university to celebrate and promote our individual goals and accomplishments with one institutional voice;
- Better coordinate in-state student recruitment, alumni engagement, and university marketing activities with existing community outreach efforts to further enhance our statewide reputation and instill pride in all Tennesseans in their state’s flagship university;
- Identify key out-of-state and international geographic markets to invest in establishing more name recognition and further the reach of our influence in order to recruit future Volunteers.

**Partner with alumni to help tell the university story.** Tactics include:
- Host alumni showcase in-person or virtual events inviting prospective students, parents, and the corporate community to hear what alumni are doing and how their education prepared them professionally. These events can also be themed around alumni talents (e.g. music, culinary);
- Feature stories, videos, and blogs of and by alumni from across the university so people can discover their inspiring stories. Categorize by college and department and promote on primary university communication channels;
- Provide gamification experience and incentivize alumni to follow university on social media, repost, like, and comment utilizing software programs like Social Toaster.
• **Develop a campus-wide 21st Century volunteer management program that attracts a generation of new volunteers who value flexibility, creative thinking, leveraging technology, and making a difference.** Tactics include:
  o Identify peer and aspirant institutions with best-in-class volunteer management programs;
  o Ensure that each student engages in a meaningful “volunteer” experience while enrolled at UTK;
  o Mobilize volunteers consisting of faculty, staff, alumni, donors, parents, business partners, and friends to help advance the priorities of the university (e.g. student recruiters, social justice/legislative advocates, mentors, brand ambassadors, job recruiters);
  o Develop a centralized website at [volunteer.utk.edu](http://volunteer.utk.edu) where volunteers can create a profile, view their volunteer hours, review important information, complete online training, and receive a digital badge or certificate for their participation;
  o Create a centralized office that would be responsible for working with campus-wide partners providing the following level of support:
    ▪ Providing data analytics to help track and measure success;
    ▪ Developing curriculum for online training modules;
    ▪ Managing centralized website.

• **Attract and retain a diverse community of faculty, staff, and students.** Tactics include:
  o Evaluate and identify the structural and access impediments to recruiting and retaining students and employees, clearly articulating: 1) What brings people here? 2) What makes people leave?
  o Implement clearly defined metrics to restructure and increase access based on the evaluation; and
  o Monitor all recruitment and retention initiatives.