

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

RESOLUTION

Vote of Full Confidence in President Joe DiPietro  
May 10, 2018

WHEREAS, President Joe DiPietro has led The University of Tennessee System with humility, honor, and integrity since January 1, 2011; and

WHEREAS, President DiPietro has led the University under a strategic plan, "Defining the Future," to align the University with the state's goal to increase enrollment and graduation rates, enhance economic development, and respond to the changing needs of the state workforce; and

WHEREAS, under President DiPietro's leadership, the University has experienced unprecedented growth in a number of areas, including enrollment, graduation rates, retention, and research; and

WHEREAS, President DiPietro has established credibility in the office of President, resulting in support by the Governor and the General Assembly for increased state appropriations which, in turn, have directly resulted in a record-setting fourth year of self-limited tuition increases of three percent or lower for University students and their parents; and

WHEREAS, under President DiPietro's leadership, and due to the Governor's strong commitment to higher education and the support of the General Assembly, the University has experienced an unprecedented increase in capital funding, especially at the flagship campus in Knoxville;

WHEREAS, President DiPietro committed the University to becoming a national model in Title IX compliance; and

WHEREAS, President DiPietro has approached every matter, including personnel matters, with the singular goal of doing what is in the best interest of the University; and

WHEREAS, at the outset of the process concerning outsourcing of facilities management services, President DiPietro, because of his strong concern for and commitment to the employees who do the hard work of maintaining University facilities day in and day out, personally negotiated with state officials to obtain binding contractual language prohibiting employee layoffs and providing total equitable, if not greater, compensation for the employees; and

WHEREAS, President DiPietro publicly and repeatedly committed that each campus would be allowed to make the outsourcing decision based on what was in its best interest, and President DiPietro and the Board have honored that commitment despite the fact that two campuses decided to forego the potential for substantial savings through outsourcing and now must find another way to achieve the savings; and

WHEREAS, despite the honest and transparent actions of President DiPietro and the Board with respect to the outsourcing decision, some continue to foment fear among our employees by repeating false allegations and rumors spread during the outsourcing process and by making the totally baseless suggestion that the Board still intends to impose outsourcing; and

WHEREAS, the Board firmly believes that the faculty as a whole is the University's most valuable asset, and the University is fortunate to have many outstanding and dedicated faculty members throughout the University system;

WHEREAS, President DiPietro, who himself has held tenured faculty appointments at three universities, is a strong advocate for academic freedom and tenure, and because of his desire to protect tenure, created an open dialogue with the University Faculty Council to improve the Board's tenure policy to enhance performance, transparency, and accountability as it relates to the tenure review process and evaluation of tenured faculty; and

WHEREAS, a small number of faculty at the flagship campus in Knoxville, including the Faculty Senate President, voiced opposition to the requirement of post-tenure review of all tenured faculty, claiming that post-tenure review is a threat to tenure despite the fact that it is a well-established practice at several public research universities with top-25 ranking, a status the flagship aspires to achieve; and

WHEREAS, the Faculty Senate at the flagship campus in Knoxville has attempted to harm the reputation of President DiPietro and the University by censuring the President for certain administrative actions; and

WHEREAS, President DiPietro's actions were undertaken with integrity and courage and, as always, in the best interest of the University.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that The University of Tennessee Board of Trustees, meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, on May 10, 2018:

1. Declares disappointment with the Knoxville Faculty Senate's censure resolution; and
2. Commends President Joe DiPietro for his integrity, courage, and invaluable service to The University of Tennessee and the State of Tennessee; and
3. Declares a "Vote of Full Confidence" in President Joe DiPietro's judgment and leadership.