



Justin P. Wilson, Comptroller

November 14, 2019

Money Mishandled by UT Knoxville Spirit Team

An investigation by the Tennessee Comptroller's Office has revealed at least \$1,580 collected by the University of Tennessee – Knoxville (UTK) Spirit Team was never deposited with the UTK Athletics' Business Office.

The Spirit Team is comprised of Smokey handlers as well as cheer, dance, and mascot teams.

The money was collected by Spirit Team personnel in 2017 and 2018 for a one-day clinic and cheer tryouts.

Investigators were advised that multiple personnel had access to the money collected, and sometimes individuals kept the money at their residences. Due to a lack of internal controls, investigators were unable to determine who was responsible for the missing money.

After investigators interviewed the Spirit Team Coordinator in June 2019, she claimed she found a packet containing \$2,047 at her residence. The UTK Athletics' Business Office acknowledged it received this money on August 6, 2019. Due to the Spirit Team's missing and inadequate records, investigators could not determine whether the \$1,580 of missing money was part of the \$2,047 the Spirit Team Coordinator found in her residence.

The results of this investigation have been communicated to the District Attorney General of the 6th Judicial District.

“Our investigators found numerous shortcomings in how the Spirit Team handled its money,” said Comptroller Justin P. Wilson. “These deficiencies included a failure to issue receipts, poor record keeping, and a failure to promptly deposit money. I’m pleased to note that UTK has indicated it has corrected these problems.”

To view the investigative report, go to: <https://comptroller.tn.gov/office-functions/investigations/find.html>

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