

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

The Honorable Justin P. Wilson
Comptroller of the Treasury
State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Comptroller Wilson:

Ensuring student success is the greatest responsibility we have at the University of Tennessee. As university leaders, we value, support, and trust our students, the majority of whom are Tennesseans. They are bright individuals who will lead Tennessee, the nation, and our world to greater heights. One core value that our students and the university share is that of learning— from each other, our successes, and our failures.

While we want to support students, we also recognize that ‘Sex Week’ has caused frustration and embarrassment for legislators, alumni, many Tennessee citizens, and for us as administrators at UT, and we and the Board are committed to rectifying this. This student-led program on the UT Knoxville campus has generated such attention due to the explicit nature of some of its events. Over the past six years, various UT administrators and trustees have taken actions to address issues related to the event; however, we recognize that their approach, while focused on handling the issues, did not fix the problem and that too many events have been more about sensationalism than education.

We are grateful for the hard work of the Comptroller’s staff in assembling this report, which is fair and accurate, including the assessment that the University has not considered all of the potential actions to remove itself from the event. We are committed to learning from the report.

Accordingly, we will implement the following actions immediately:

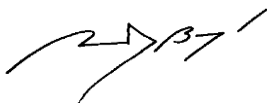
- We will share copies of the Comptroller’s report with the UT Board of Trustees and engage in a public discussion of the Comptroller’s policy considerations with the Board at its next meeting on March 1.
- We will work with the Board to make the policy change necessary to cease future allocations of funds directly to registered student organizations and eliminate the Student Programming Allocation Committee (SPAC) [*Comptroller Policy Consideration #8*]. We also will work with the Board to develop a process in which the administration decides what programming to fund, including sex education programming, with input from students. Making this change will address the issue of potential bias in the allocation process [*Comptroller Policy Consideration #7*].

- We will adopt a more consistent and proactive communication strategy for students, parents, and Tennessee citizens regarding Sex Week [*Comptroller Policy Consideration #6*].
- As part of our transparency initiative, we will publish detailed information on funding for registered student organizations for spring 2019 programming [*Comptroller Policy Consideration #3*].
- We will study the possibility of charging registered student organizations for the use of facilities that are not funded by the student activity fee [*Comptroller Policy Consideration #10*].

These steps likely will not prevent negative publicity and public displeasure of Sex Week 2019, a portion of which has already been funded with student activity fees under the current SPAC process. We are continuing to engage with the leaders of the student organization (SEAT) that organizes Sex Week, urging them to focus on “human sexuality as a legitimate academic field of inquiry” as noted in page 1 of the Comptroller’s report, and alter the descriptions and promotion of the programs to be more educational in nature. However, as the Comptroller’s report recognizes, previous campus discussions to that effect have not been successful.

It is our sincere hope that our actions to utilize the Comptroller’s report and policy considerations will help us address this issue more effectively and use all of our resources to achieve student success.

Sincerely,



Randy Boyd
Interim President



Wayne T. Davis
Interim Chancellor