

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 47

By Hawk

A RESOLUTION to commend and congratulate the members of the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees upon receiving the 2021 John W. Nason Award for Board Leadership.

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that the members of this General Assembly recognize those dutiful and august bodies that serve to improve the quality of universities and colleges throughout this State; and

WHEREAS, the University of Tennessee (UT) Board of Trustees was recently honored with the 2021 John W. Nason Award for Board Leadership by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, the premier organization representing higher education governing boards; and

WHEREAS, established in 1992, the John W. Nason Award for Board Leadership is presented to higher education governing boards that demonstrate exceptional leadership and initiative; up to six awards are presented annually; and

WHEREAS, this award comes a mere three years after the passage of the Tennessee Focusing on Campus and University Success (FOCUS) Act, which created a smaller, more nimble board of twelve members empowered to focus on the specific needs of the multiple campuses within the UT system; since 2018, the UT trustees, who were all new to the board, have taken a series of deliberate steps to build the board from the ground up, employing best practices in governance; and

WHEREAS, early in their service, the board members conducted informal listening tours to gather feedback from students, faculty, staff, alumni, legislators, former trustees, and members of the public; from those conversations, the trustees established greater access, improved transparency, and continuing engagement as the cornerstones of their work; and

WHEREAS, the University of Tennessee system has thrived under the leadership of the UT Board of Trustees; even during the 2020-2021 academic year, in the midst of a pandemic, the university system set records, including a system-wide enrollment increase of 1.9 percent to an all-time high of 52,559 students, the conferring of more than 8,600 degrees in 2020 alone, and an all-time-high research expenditure of \$431 million; and

WHEREAS, UT recently welcomed its first class of recipients of the UT Promise scholarship, which guarantees free tuition and mandatory fees for qualified undergraduate students with an annual family income of under \$50,000; the university also recently received a \$20 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy that expanded UT's partnership with Oak Ridge National Laboratory; and

WHEREAS, the members of the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees are wholly devoted to the success of the University of Tennessee system, and they are most deserving of our commendation at this time; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commend and congratulate the members of the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees upon receiving the 2021 John W. Nason Award for Board Leadership, extending our deepest gratitude for their good work and our best wishes for much success in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.