

# STUDENT AFFAIRS NEWSLETTER

The Division of Student Affairs Quarterly Newsletter



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**HOMECOMING - PAGE 1**

**HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH -  
PAGE 3**

**FIRST-GENERATION  
CELEBRATION - PAGE 4**

**MARC BURNETT RECREATION  
CENTER - PAGE 5**

**STUDENT SPOTLIGHT - PAGE 6**

**COUNSELING TRAINING - PAGE 6**

**UPCOMING EVENTS - PAGE 7**

## A CENTURY OF SPIRIT: CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF GOLDEN EAGLES AT HOMECOMING

Tennessee Tech's 100th Homecoming celebration was a vibrant gathering of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members, marking a week filled with exciting events that culminated in a stunning parade and football game. From October 28 to November 2, the campus buzzed with enthusiasm as Golden Eagles came together to honor a century of rich history and tradition.

The festivities kicked off on October 28 with the Banner Competition in the RUC First Floor Lobby, where various organizations displayed their creativity. Banners in radiant gold and purple showcased the pride of each group, fostering a spirited atmosphere of friendly competition.



*Continued on Page 2*

At the same time, a Crowdfunding Drive was launched to support the Food Pantry and various Homecoming teams, showcasing the university's commitment to service and fostering community engagement.

On October 29, students cast their votes during Homecoming Court Election Day at Centennial Plaza. Candidates campaigned passionately for the prestigious titles of Mr. and Ms. Tennessee Tech, creating an atmosphere of excitement. Later that evening, the Lip Sync Competition at Memorial Gym entertained the crowd with lively performances, as participants brought popular songs to life through energetic lip-syncing.

Wednesday night transformed the Main Quad into a festive wonderland with the Homecoming Carnival, where students and families enjoyed games, food, and fun, creating cherished memories in a celebratory atmosphere. This event truly embodied the community spirit of Tennessee Tech, uniting people of all ages.

On October 31, the Homecoming Hangout provided a perfect midday break for students to connect and enjoy refreshments and minute-to-win-it games on Centennial Plaza, strengthening bonds among students. Tennessee Tech Football Coach Bobby Wilder and Athletic Director Mark Wilson were also present, taking part in the festivities and engaging with students.

The week reached its pinnacle on November 2 with the Homecoming Parade, which traveled through campus starting at Dixie Avenue. Local high school marching bands, community organizations, and the homecoming court filled the streets with vibrant music and color, making this year's parade particularly special as it celebrated a century of Golden Eagles.

The festivities concluded with the Homecoming Football Game at Tucker Stadium, where fans donned gold and purple, cheering on their team. The vibrant atmosphere reflected the deep sense of unity and pride felt by everyone in attendance.

Ultimately, Homecoming is more than just a celebration; it's a powerful reminder of the bonds that tie us together as Golden Eagles. It's a time to reflect on our shared history, celebrate our achievements, and strengthen the connections that make our community so special. These moments of unity and pride not only honor our past but also inspire us to look forward to the future. Here's to the enduring spirit of Homecoming, where we celebrate who we are and the journey ahead.



# TENNESSEE TECH HONORS HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Tennessee Tech University's Intercultural Affairs office celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month with a series of engaging events from September 15 to October 15, showcasing the rich diversity of Hispanic and Latin cultures.

The festivities began with the Upper Cumberland Hispanic Heritage Festival at Dogwood Park on September 15, featuring cultural booths, delicious cuisine, and musical performances.

The celebration continued with several notable events, including a Tamale Tuesday hosted by Alpha Psi Lambda on September 17, where students enjoyed homemade tamales in the Intercultural Lounge.

On September 30, the "Campus Conversations: Sharing Our Stories" event provided a platform for Hispanic and Latino students, faculty, and alumni to share their experiences, fostering connection and understanding within the community. The panel included Gabe Ramos from Alpha Psi Lambda and Cindy Escobar from SHPE, alongside distinguished alumni Attorney Ramon Damas and Maria Baltazar, Tech Recruitment Specialist. Attendees listened intently as the panelists shared their personal stories, fostering an atmosphere of connection and dialogue.

Concluding the month on October 3rd, the SOLO Events Committee and Futuro, the Latino career readiness student organization, hosted Aprender Night which transformed Centennial Plaza into a celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, drawing students and community members for an evening filled with culture and fun. Attendees enjoyed salsa lessons and delicious offerings of authentic Mexican cuisine, allowing guests to savor the rich flavors of Hispanic culture, while live music created a lively atmosphere. A creative station invited participants to paint their own maracas, providing a personal keepsake from the festivities.

These events not only celebrated the richness of Hispanic culture but also fostered engagement and meaningful dialogue among students and the broader community, offering opportunities to explore diverse traditions, share personal stories, and deepen understanding of the contributions of Hispanic communities.



Photos taken by Lilly Davis

# CELEBRATING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS: A WEEK OF RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT

Tennessee Tech University recently celebrated National First-Generation Celebration Week, held November 4-8, 2024, honoring the achievements and journeys of first-generation students, faculty, and staff. The week coincided with the anniversary of the Higher Education Act of 1965, landmark legislation that expanded access to higher education for low-income and first-generation students, helping to level the playing field and provide greater opportunities for success.

The celebration included a series of impactful events designed to support and empower first-gen students on campus, highlighting their unique challenges and celebrating their accomplishments.

On Tuesday, November 5, the Dress for Success event helped students prepare for their professional futures, offering practical tips on how to tie a tie and dress for success in professional settings. Hosted by the Office of First-Generation Student Success and the College of Business Professional Readiness & Leadership Center, the session provided students with valuable insights on dressing confidently for interviews, networking events, and other career-building opportunities.

Then, on Thursday, November 7, the First to Soar event featured a panel of first-generation faculty who shared their personal experiences and challenges as first-gen students. Organized by the Office of First-Generation Student Success and the CAFÉ, the event offered students inspiration and practical advice on navigating the academic journey while introducing them to the new resources available through the First-Generation Student Success office.

These events underscored Tennessee Tech's commitment to supporting first-generation students by offering tailored resources, fostering community connections, and highlighting success stories, ensuring students have the tools they need to succeed academically and professionally.



# THE MARC L. BURNETT RECREATION CENTER: FUELING STUDENT SUCCESS

Since the grand opening in 2020, The Marc L. Burnett Recreation and Fitness Center has quickly become a centerpiece of campus life at Tennessee Tech. With over 150,000 square feet dedicated to health and wellness, this center embodies Tennessee Tech's commitment to supporting the well-being of its community. Students find everything they need to stay active, from cardio and strength equipment to an indoor track, basketball courts, and a pool area perfect for laps or relaxation.

The Fitness Center has become a community hub. Group classes like yoga, Pilates, and cycling foster friendships and encourage a supportive atmosphere. The Burnett Recreation and Fitness Center has not only become a place for casual workouts, but also as a launchpad for extraordinary achievements. This was especially true for Tennessee Tech student and weightlifter Justin Schlenkert, who has spent countless hours at the Fitness Center in preparation for a recent weightlifting meet, where he set three national records in the process. Reflecting on his experience, Justin says, "The people and the environment are the main drivers at the Fit."

In just a few short years, the Marc L. Burnett Recreation and Fitness Center has established itself as a cornerstone of student life at Tennessee Tech, inspiring students to pursue their goals and build a community that supports every milestone, big or small.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: BAYLEE DALTON

Baylee, a first-semester MBA student at Tennessee Tech University, is set to graduate in the summer of 2025. She earned her undergraduate degree in Business Information and Technology (BIT) with a minor in Business Management. During her time at Tech, Baylee has been an active campus leader, serving as a College of Business Ambassador, a Trailblazers captain, and volunteering as the coordinator for Fall Fun Fest. She also helped launch the COVID-19 Grocery Relief program in Spring 2021.

Currently, Baylee works as a Graduate Assistant for the College of Business and a Teaching Assistant for a computer forensics course. Graduating debt-free is one of her proudest achievements. After completing her MBA, she plans to pursue a career in IT project management or consulting in Nashville. Baylee credits her success to the Tech community and encourages others to “believe in yourself and know you are capable of more than you think.”



# STRENGTHENING CRISIS RESPONSE THROUGH MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

Dr. Christina Mick, Director for the Center for Counseling and Mental Health Wellness, and Ben Higgins recently presented on College and University Mental Health and Adjustment to the Community Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) at the Cookeville Police Department. The CIT is a collaborative effort involving law enforcement, mental health professionals, addiction specialists, individuals living with mental illness, their families, and various advocates. This community-based model of crisis intervention prioritizes both officer safety and the safety of individuals in crisis, aiming to foster effective responses in challenging situations.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

There is always something exciting going on at Tennessee Tech! Check out all the great upcoming events hosted by the Division of Student Affairs and Tennessee Tech, and contact us for more information!

- **Fall Commencement**, The Fall graduation ceremonies will take place at 9:00 am and 2:00 pm on Friday, December 13th, at the Hooper Eblen Center.
- **First Day of Class**, The first day of the Spring 2025 semester will begin on Thursday, January 16th.
- **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**, Monday, January 20. Join in celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through reflections by students and staff.
- **Black History Month**, February 1-28. Taking time out to recognize and celebrate the contributions, achievements, and history of African Americans.



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