

Findings to Think About

Positioning the Flagship Campus

A stand-out finding is that almost everyone in the state (95.3%) believes it is important to have a top-ranked state university in Tennessee. However, only 55.1% agree or strongly agree that UT Knoxville is among the top-ranked universities in the country.

Positioning the Smaller Campuses

The smaller campuses are largely off the radar. Their unique contributions to the state need more attention. More data are needed to ascertain perceptions of the campuses at Martin and Chattanooga.

Balancing Athletics and Academics

The survey shows that having a top-ranked university is significantly more important to people than having nationally-ranked athletic teams. Less than half (47.3%) say it is important or very important to have top-ranked athletic teams at UT, while nearly all (95.3%) say it is important to have a top-ranked state university. However, when asked the first thing that comes to mind when thinking of the University of Tennessee, the answer is not academics. We need to bring academics into balance with football as our core brand.

“When you think of the University of Tennessee, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?”



Connecting to Stakeholder Values

We must take into account what Tennesseans are interested in and not assume that our priorities match theirs. Three important issues to people in all regions of the state are health and medical sciences, families and child development, and moral and ethical issues. UT does important work in these areas that may be underreported.

We must understand how people currently think, and meet them there before we try to move them to our position. For instance, the survey indicates we need to communicate *why* priorities such as the international and intercultural initiative are important, rather than simply focusing on *what* we are doing. Likewise, the data indicate we need to explain the importance of the ORNL partnership, especially in the West Tennessee.

Benchmark Measures to Improve ↗

- 55.1% agree or strongly agree that UT Knoxville is among the top-ranked universities in the country
- 33.5% say that higher education in Tennessee is getting better
- 51.3% agree or strongly agree that UT Knoxville is the major research university in the state
- 44.9% agree or strongly agree that research conducted by UT has an impact on the overall quality of their life
- 40.2% agree or strongly agree they would pay more taxes to have a nationally ranked university
- 57% believe UT Knoxville is an above average institution
(2005 THEC survey)