

Bylaws of the University of Tennessee-Oak Ridge Innovation Institute (UT-ORII)

Adopted: March 6, 2025

Preamble

The University of Tennessee-Oak Ridge Innovation Institute (UT-ORII) was launched by the University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory in 2021, in response to America's need for a stronger pool of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) talent. Leveraging a partnership between UT and ORNL that dates from the Manhattan Project, UT-ORII strategically combines the resources of Tennessee's statewide university system and the country's largest multi-disciplinary national laboratory to accelerate collaborative discovery, innovation and interdisciplinary graduate education, and to deliver top-tier talent for industry, government and academia.

Mission

To strategically align the expertise and infrastructure of the University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge National Laboratory in interdisciplinary research and graduate education.

Vision

To become a coveted home for convergent research and talent development, helping maintain U.S. prominence as a global innovation leader and provide tangible impact to Tennessee.

Purpose of these bylaws

UT-ORII adheres to a faculty governance system administered by UT-ORII's Executive Director and Vice Provost. The UT-ORII bylaws promote the orderly conduct of business of the institute. The administrative staff of UT-ORII agrees to govern the institute according to these bylaws.

These bylaws shall not supersede any University of Tennessee policies or guidelines. Institute bylaws can be changed by a majority vote of the Institute's total faculty present at a duly called meeting, with an appropriate quorum.

ARTICLE I. THE INSTITUTE

Section 1: The Director

The Executive Director for UT-ORII, (herein referred to as the "Director"), is the senior management leader responsible for oversight of the institute's operations and activities and developing, planning and implementing success strategies. The Director is responsible and accountable to ORNL and UT for the strategic alignment and overall performance of the institute.

The Director hire will be made in accordance with section 5 of the *Agreement Regarding the Oak Ridge Institute at the University of Tennessee* dated July 15, 2020.

Section 2: The Bredesen Center

The Bredesen Center for Interdisciplinary Research and Graduate Education (Bredesen Center) is UT-ORII's educational unit. The Bredesen Center administers three PhD programs on behalf of UT-ORII: Data Science and Engineering (DSE); Energy Science and Engineering (ESE), Genome Science and Technology (GST). The Bredesen Center is led by the UT-ORII Education Director, who reports to the

UT-ORII Director. Each program is managed by a Program Director who reports to the UT-ORII Education Director. Each Program Director functions as the program's Director of Graduate Studies, reporting to the responsible units of the University of Tennessee in that capacity.

Section 3: The Faculty

The UT-ORII faculty is defined as the collective of all individuals at UT and ORNL involved with UT-ORII through the educational activities of the Bredesen Center and the research activities of the institute's Convergent Research Initiatives (CRIs). The faculty also includes leadership affiliates who have a formal stake in UT-ORII. These roles are further defined as follows:

UT-ORII Joint Research Faculty

- UT-ORII JFUs (Joint Faculty – University): UT employees with primary appointments in UT-ORII. This category does not include JFUs from other UT units who have joint appointments with ORNL.
- UT-ORII JFOs (Joint Faculty – ORNL): UT-Battelle employees with joint faculty appointments in UT-ORII

UT-ORII Education Programs Faculty

- OGAs: UT-Battelle employees with ORNL Graduate Advisor (OGA) appointments in the Bredesen Center
- Joint Faculty (term recognized by the UTK Office of the Provost to denote Bredesen Center affiliation for faculty in other academic departments): UT employees from other academic departments who advise Bredesen Center students
- Teaching Faculty: UT employees with non-tenure-track teaching positions in the Bredesen Center

UT-ORII Leadership Affiliate Faculty

- UT or UT-Battelle employees not described elsewhere who have formally recognized affiliations with UT-ORII, usually in a leadership or advisory capacity. These may include, but are not limited to, the following roles:
 - Administrative appointees (i.e., affiliates with formal administrative appointments in UT-ORII. These appointees will often have tenure in an academic department or hold scientific leadership roles at ORNL)
 - Governor's Chairs (GCs)
 - Bredesen Center Program Directors
 - CRI leadership

Expectations and responsibilities from the UTK Faculty Handbook should be observed. Supplemental expectations are documented in faculty appointment letters on an individual basis.

UT-ORII JFUs may be hired at the rank of research assistant professor, research associate professor, or research professor, depending on experience and qualification. Similarly, UT-ORII Teaching Faculty may be hired at any rank in the "Lecturer" or "Teaching Professor" categories as described in the faculty handbook, depending on experience and qualification.

UT-ORII JFUs will participate in the university's annual performance evaluation process. Evaluation criteria are focused in the areas of research productivity, graduate student mentorship and general scholarship activities. Specific criteria will be documented in appointment letters upon hire/renewal and performance evaluation documentation.

Reappointment decisions for UT-ORII JFUs and Teaching Faculty should be based on the faculty member's performance relative to the expectations listed in the appointment letter and as described in annual performance evaluation documentation. Reappointment review should occur in the final year of the current appointment period, preferably coinciding with that year's annual performance evaluation cycle. Every effort should be made to provide written notice as early as possible to faculty who will not be reappointed.

Criterion for promotion in rank is excellence in performing the primary responsibilities established in the initial appointment letter, as well as any changes made and recorded at the time of the annual performance reviews. Refer to the *Guidelines for the Promotion of Research Faculty* document for details on UT-ORII's promotion process and criteria for promotion.

After serving at the rank of lecturer or assistant professor, typically for a minimum of five years, a faculty member may apply for promotion to the rank of senior lecturer or associate professor, respectively. After serving at the rank of senior lecturer or associate professor, typically for a minimum of three to five years, a faculty member may apply for promotion to the rank of distinguished lecturer or professor, respectively.

Section 4: Meetings

There will be at least two regular UT-ORII faculty meetings each calendar year. Attendance at meetings is mandatory for UT employees whose primary appointment is with UT-ORII and strongly encouraged for all other faculty members. Virtual attendance, if offered, is acceptable. Minutes of the meeting shall be recorded, distributed to the faculty, and filed by an appointee. A quorum for a meeting shall be defined as 70% of the voting faculty for whom attendance is required, plus a minimum of 10% of other faculty members defined above. All meetings shall be called by the Director or a delegate. Additional meetings may be called upon a written request of 20 percent or more of the voting members of UT-ORII or at the request of the Director.

The parliamentary rules contained in the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern the faculty in all cases to which they are applicable and consistent with the procedures for UT-ORII faculty meetings.

In all regular meetings of the Institute, the order of business shall be as follows:

1. Call to order
2. Approval of distributed minutes
3. Introduction of new members
4. Reports of standing committees as needed
5. Reports of ad hoc committees as needed
6. Report from representatives as needed
7. Old business
8. New business
9. Adjournment

Section 5: UT-ORII Scribe

A UT-ORII scribe shall be nominated and elected by the UT-ORII faculty with the duties of recording

the minutes of the Institute's meetings, distributing copies of the minutes to the faculty and maintaining a permanent file of minutes in the Director's Office. The scribe is elected for a term of two years, and the election must take place before the last faculty meeting of the academic year.

Section 6: Agenda

Meetings shall be conducted according to a written agenda circulated to the faculty members by the Director's office at least one week before. A call for items on the agenda shall be circulated to the faculty at least four days before the meeting. Under exceptional circumstances, these conditions may be waived by a majority vote of the faculty present at a duly called meeting.

Section 7: Elections of Representatives to the Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate

UT-ORII representatives shall be elected from the faculty to serve on the University Graduate Council and the Faculty Senate.

Section 8: Role of Faculty in Faculty Search Committees

UT-ORII faculty play a vital role in the faculty search process of UT-ORII and may be involved as search committee members or by attending candidate seminars. Faculty involvement in faculty searches should follow the *UTK Faculty Handbook* and current guidelines from administrative offices that provide oversight of employment searches at the university. UT-ORII expects faculty search committees to conduct the search process in ways that foster openness and transparency, with deliberations about the desired criteria for faculty positions and the relative merits of individual candidates. Search committees should actively identify and encourage applications from highly qualified candidates and should commit to running an effective and efficient search.

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1. A search committee, including significant representation from UT-ORII faculty, should be formed. Additional members with relevant subject matter expertise and/or scientific leadership roles at either UT or ORNL should round out the committee. Committees should include employee representation from UT and ORNL if not covered by the two previous requirements.
2. The search process should provide opportunities for UT-ORII faculty and non-faculty stakeholders at UT and ORNL to interact with the candidates. At a minimum, this should include an invitation to the candidate's research seminar.
3. UT-ORII faculty (within the subject CRI) and other faculty and non-faculty stakeholders should have the opportunity to provide feedback on candidates to the search committee based on their observations of and interactions with candidates.
4. The search committee should present CRI leadership with a list of acceptable candidates. In cases where CRI leadership does not exist, the Director will assume this role.
5. CRI leadership will present a consensus hiring recommendation to the Director.
6. Prior to the Director's hiring decision, one or more Bredesen Center program directors should evaluate the prevailing candidate(s) for initial approval of advising privileges for Bredesen Center students, in accordance with Article II, Section 2 of these bylaws.
7. The Director will select candidates after consideration of the preceding recommendations and outcomes and negotiate an offer.

ARTICLE II. COMMITTEES OF THE INSTITUTE AND THEIR ACTIONS

Committees contribute to the shared governance of the institute and provide valuable guidance to

the Director. UT-ORII has two standing committees (Promotion and Bredesen Center Graduate Advisor Credentials Committee) that serve the Institute. In addition, each PhD program within the Bredesen Center has two standing committees (Steering and Admissions) that address issues specific to the program. Ad hoc committees may be created by the UT-ORII Director or the UT-ORII Education Director without consultation from the faculty. Final reports of committees are to be entered in the minutes.

Section 1: Promotion Committee

This committee is tasked with evaluating full-time UT-ORII JFUs and UT-ORII Teaching Faculty for promotion. The committee will act in the place of a typical college promotion committee and the UT-ORII Director will act as the Dean. The committee will have a minimum of five members who will be appointed for three years, with the inaugural members rotating off in a staggered manner (after one or two years) to establish a cycle for appointing new members. The promotion process of UT-ORII research faculty will be handled according to the *UTK Faculty Handbook*. The Promotion Committee members that are UT Faculty will have a rank at or greater than the promotion rank sought by the faculty candidate. The Promotion committee members who are ORNL staff will have time of service, and research and scholarly output comparable to or above the promotion rank sought by the faculty candidate. The Dossier will be reviewed by the committee, and the members will vote on promotion. A summary letter will be prepared by the committee and submitted to the UT-ORII Director or designee. The UT-ORII Director or designee will review the Dossier and Promotion Committee letter and submit a recommendation letter to the provost's office for review.

All recommendations of the Committee shall conform to the standards and procedures set forth in the *UTK Faculty Handbook*, and the *Board of Trustees Policies Governing Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure (BT0006)*.

Section 2: Bredesen Center Graduate Advisor Credentials Committee

This committee is tasked with evaluating candidates for both initial approval and reappointment of the advising privileges for Bredesen Center mentors. The committee includes the UT-ORII Education Director, who will serve as chair, and the Bredesen Center Program Directors. New advisors are evaluated for appointment based on submission of a CV, statement of interest, and approval from direct supervisor. Documents are reviewed at least twice a year and, upon approval, an equivalent faculty rank (assistant, associate or full professor) is assigned for applicants who are ORNL staff. Appointments are made for five years, after which time they will be evaluated for reappointment if requested. Renewal requires that the faculty member has participated in at least one of the following three Bredesen Center activities during the previous five-year period:

1. Served as primary advisor for a Bredesen Center student
2. Served on the dissertation committee for a Bredesen Center student
3. Served on a Bredesen Center committee

This committee will also evaluate reappointment based on the progress of existing/past student(s) as well as the individual record of the advisor.

Bredesen Center faculty members who leave UT or ORNL employment permanently, retire, or become Emeritus automatically lose their faculty status. The faculty member can petition to the Director that her or his status be upheld, for example, to allow their student to complete their degree or to allow continued service on thesis/dissertation committees.

Section 3: Bredesen Center Program Steering Committees

The steering committee is the advisory body of the program, which provides direction in achieving the program's and Bredesen Center's goals and objectives. The steering committee serves as the program's curriculum committee and provides guidance to the Program Director and the Education Director regarding the coursework and academic activities specific to each program. The committee should meet at least twice a year. The committee considers and reviews proposed curricular changes before their submission to the program's voting faculty for approval. Faculty membership on each committee will represent the diverse scientific spectrum of each program and will typically include faculty members from both ORNL and UT. The director designates the chair of each standing committee. In consultation with the Program Directors, the Steering Committee members are appointed by the Education Director to serve a two-year term.

The steering committees will hear cross-cutting issues and questions that may apply to all Bredesen Center programs. These may include degree qual procedures, stipend amounts, student committee composition issues, criteria for dismissal from the program, etc. These committees will also represent the larger UT-ORII faculty in voting on and approving changes to the *Bredesen Center Student Handbook*. Each program subcommittee will develop recommendations on program-specific curricular issues. Recommendations will be sent to the UT-ORII Administration for a decision.

Section 4: Bredesen Center Program Admissions Committees

The admissions committee is responsible for the review and ranking of all applicant files for each program. The committee makes recommendations for admission to the Program Director.

Section 5: Ad Hoc Committees

The responsibilities, membership and duration of these committees shall be established at the time of their creation.

ARTICLE III. MODIFICATION OF BYLAWS AND CURRICULUM

Section 1: Procedures for Modification of These Bylaws

Changes to these bylaws, with exceptions for Article I, Sections 3 and 8 (The Faculty and Roles of Faculty on Search Committees) and curricular modifications as noted below, can be proposed by any faculty group member. It is strongly recommended that faculty members consult with the UT-ORII Director regarding the aims and wording of any proposed changes before formally requesting changes to the bylaws. The voting process includes a simple majority vote held during faculty meetings for which a quorum is present as described in Article I, Section 4.

Section 2: Procedures for Modification of the Promotion Process and Faculty Roles on Search Committees

Proposed changes to the promotion process and faculty roles on search committees can be made by the faculty groups who are subject to these topics. It is strongly recommended that faculty members consult with the UT-ORII Director regarding the aims and wording of any proposed changes before formally requesting changes to the bylaws. The voting process will typically occur by e-mail or similar electronic means. For business conducted asynchronously by electronic means, a staged quorum is used. For the first three business days of the voting window, a quorum of 40% applies to decide the issue. If the quorum is not reached within this time, voting is extended for an additional two business

days, after which the issue is decided regardless of a quorum.

Section 3: Procedures for Curricular Modifications

The curriculum of each program is under the purview of the program's voting faculty, as prescribed in the *UTK Faculty Handbook*. It is strongly recommended that faculty members consult with the UT-ORII Education Director regarding the aims and wording of any proposed changes before formally requesting changes to the bylaws. Voting faculty for curricular issues consist of UT-ORII Education Programs Faculty, specifically OGAs and Joint Faculty. Proposed changes to the curriculum in each program are first reviewed by the steering committee and program director. When a proposed change affects more than one program, the relevant steering committees and program directors will act in concert. Proposals that are deemed to be worthy of further consideration are then submitted to the voting faculty. Examples include changes to the core curriculum and graduation requirements, progression requirements, format of the comprehensive or qualifying exam and defenses. For proposals that affect more than one program, voting faculty will consist of the combined faculty from the relevant programs. The voting process will typically occur by e-mail or similar electronic means. For business conducted asynchronously by electronic means, a staged quorum is used. For the first three business days of the voting window, a quorum of 40% applies to decide the issue. If the quorum is not reached within this time, voting is extended for an additional two business days, after which the issue is decided regardless of a quorum.

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