

## STAKEHOLDER EXPERIENCE SURVEY

A stakeholder survey was conducted in September 2017 to support the UTIA strategic planning effort. The survey was sent to various advisory boards and other key stakeholders associated with UTIA. The objective was to understand external perspectives of Institute strengths, challenges, and opportunities. The outcomes and key themes are summarized below.

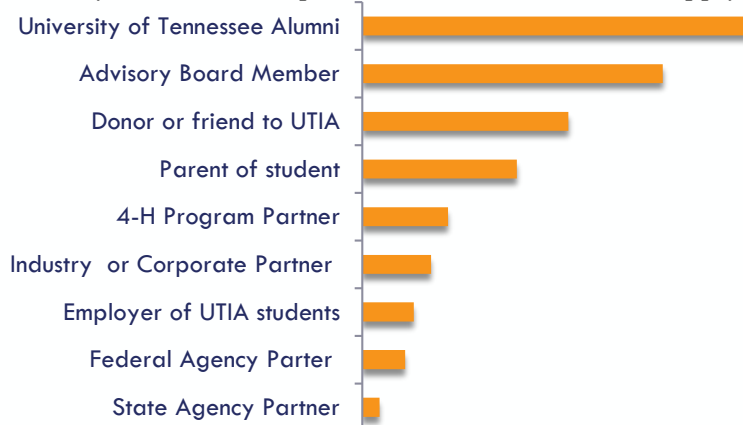
## RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

- Users of UTIA services are extremely satisfied. Opportunities for improvement include securing stronger funding mechanism, increasing outreach, and expediting the dissemination of information.
- Alumni extremely satisfied with decision to attend UT. However, parents showed lower levels of satisfaction with their children’s experience. Suggestions for improving the student experience focused on experience learning and tuition affordability.
- Stakeholders identified Extension operations in counties/local base, objective research, academic excellence and faculty and staff as UTIA strengths. Also noted was service to Tennessee and commitment to the land grant mission.
- Perspectives of challenges included funding, retention and recruitment of faculty and staff, research relevance, and keeping up with a rapidly changing industry, among other points
- Participants identified specific around industry, the environment, and communities as opportunities for concentration within the sector
- Recommendations for change centered around funding/ resource allocation, establishing external partnerships, building around priorities, improving information/outreach, and recruiting and retaining faculty and staff

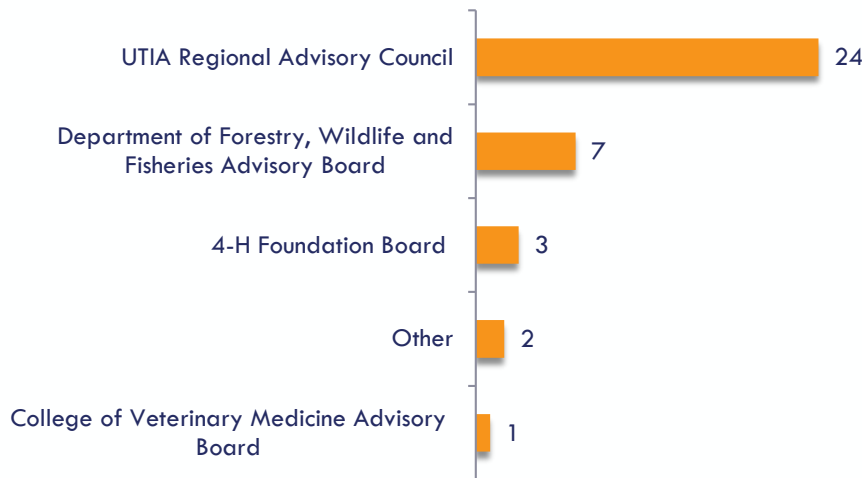
## PARTICIPANT PROFILE

UTIA received 90 responses from stakeholders. The survey asked participants to indicate the multiple ways stakeholders connect to UTIA to gain a perspective of types of relationships. The most frequently noted relationship was University of Tennessee alumni.

*What is your relationship with UTIA? Check all that apply.*



One-third of respondents serve on an advisory board at UTIA with the majority serving on a UTIA Regional Advisory Council.

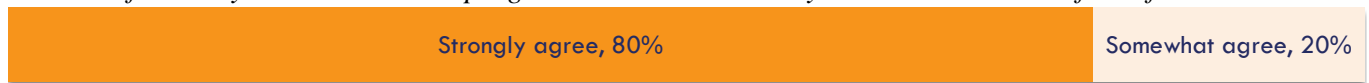


## UTIA SERVICES

66 respondents identified as users of UTIA services and provided feedback on their experience. These users indicated a strong level of satisfaction with their experiences. However, we note that since many serve in some sort of an advocacy capacity such as an advisory board, satisfaction levels may be higher than average.

Users primarily designated experience primarily with UTIA programs and services sponsored by Extension including 4-H, master beef class, blood testing services, soil testing services, professional education, agriculture research (grain, cotton, lawn services, horticulture), educational field days, workshops for homeowners, extension consultations (various areas), UT gardens. Respondents also frequently mentioned experience with the UT veterinary medicine clinics.

*How satisfied are you with the UTIA programs and services that you used and/ or benefitted from?*



Note: Neither Agree/ Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree - 0%

## USERS OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FEEDBACK

Survey participants were asked to describe in their own words “if you could suggest one change to these programs and services, what would it be?”

Responses fell into the following thematic categories:

- **Financial Support** – Users most frequently noted that additional financial support was necessary, particularly as it relates to fund extension agents and specialists.
- **Communication of Services/ Publicity** – Users also mentioned the desire for UTIA to better communicate available services to users and improving publicity of services.
- **Timely Research** – More timely access to research was identified as an opportunity for improvement.
- **Other** – Other comments related to:
  - More support for 4-H volunteers and incentives for students to participate in 4-H
  - Additional community development activities
  - Improvement of facilities
  - Professional development services for educators

### USER VOICE: IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

*“Timely marketing research in agriculture commodities.”*

*“More financial support for extension offices.”*

*“More promotion and publicity. UTIA is completely unknown to my urban/ suburban friends and neighbors.”*

*“Broader understanding of available services.”*

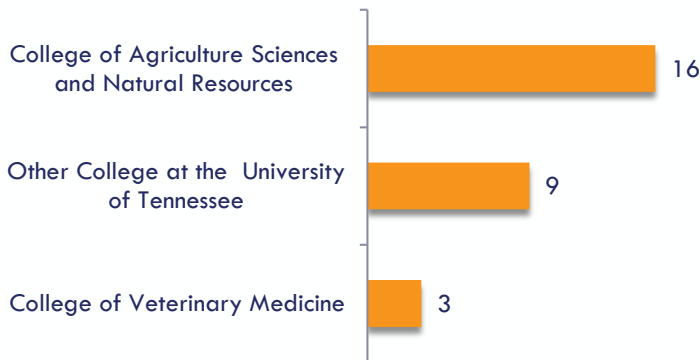
*“Need a dedicated poultry specialist.”*

*“More outreach by the 4-H Foundation to raise corporate dollars.”*

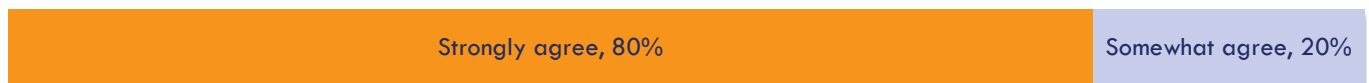
*“Better funding mechanisms.”*

## ALUMNI PERSPECTIVE

28 respondents participated in the alumni feedback portion of the survey. The majority of participants were graduates of CASNR. Alumni demonstrated an extremely high satisfaction with their University of Tennessee experience. While this is positive feedback, we note a small sample size.



*You are satisfied with your decision to attend the University of Tennessee and would choose to attend again if you could do over.*



Note: Neither Agree/Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Strongly Disagree - 0%

## PARENT PERSPECTIVE

11 respondents were parents of current or former students at the University of Tennessee. 5 students were associated with CASNR, while the remaining 6 enrolled at another college at UT. While remaining positive overall, parents were less enthusiastic than alumni on satisfaction with the University of Tennessee as a choice for their children. Again, we note a small sample size.

*I am satisfied with my child's decision to attend the University of Tennessee and would support the decision to attend again if I could do it over.*



Note: Neither Agree/Disagree - 9%, Somewhat Disagree - 9%, Strongly Disagree - 0%

## ALUMNI AND PARENT FEEDBACK

Alumni and parent respondents were asked to describe in their own words “if you could suggest one change to the UT student experience, what would it be?”

Responses fell into the following thematic categories:

- **Experience Learning** – The overwhelming theme for improvement was experience learning, particularly the focus on internships and hands on experience in the classroom.
- **Tuition** – Users also recommended strategies to make UT more affordable and provide students with financial support
- **Other** – Other comments related to:
  - Availability of parking
  - Mentoring
  - Support students in on-time graduation

### ALUMNI AND PARENT VOICE: STUDENT EXPERIENCE

*“Greater emphasis on internships. And, of course better football!”*

*“Lower out of state tuition for children of UT graduates.”*

*“More involvement of undergrads in faculty research.”*

*“So many students come from a non-farm background and need the grounding that hands on experience can provide.”*

*“Financial literacy education as a requirement for all incoming freshmen!.”*

*“More integration of industry into the classroom so students could get a real time experience.”*

*“More exposure to job opportunities and needs in the “real” (vs academic) world. This probably applies as much to the*

## STRENGTHS

Survey participants were asked to describe in their own words “what UTIA strengths need to be preserved.”

Responses fell into the following thematic categories:

- **Extension** – One of the major themes was the need to maintain the strength of Extension resources in local areas. Many of the programs and services offered by Extension such as the Master Beef course and 4-H were mentioned as specific strengths.
- **Research** – The sense of unbiased research and the importance of this research to the agriculture industry also surfaced as a theme.
- **Academic Excellence** – Academic excellence was often noted as a strength with reference to hands-on experience.
- **Faculty and Staff** – The need to recruit and retain excellent faculty and staff
- **Other** –Other comments related to:
  - Connections with industry
  - Service to Tennessee
  - Community outreach
  - Commitment to the land grant mission

## STAKEHOLDER VOICE: STRENGTHS

*“The connection with the people in the industries, agencies, corporations, farms and families that benefit from the services, research and education. The value of high standards and high quality.”*

*“Down to earth, practical focus. Service to people of the state. Cutting edge research on important issues.”*

*“Continued support of an ever improving research program related to real life issues. Outreach to communities to share research results to improve the quality of life for communities and families.”*

*“Meeting the needs of Tennessean in all counties across the state.”*

*“Reputation for unbiased information dissemination.”*

*“Teaching students natural science and providing*

## CHALLENGES

Stakeholders were asked to describe in their own words “what are the most important challenges facing UTIA in the next ten years?”

Responses fell into the following thematic categories:

- **Funding** – The challenge of funding was the most frequent theme with stakeholder responses. While participants provided different examples of needs for funding, the consistent theme was securing the funding necessary to serve the UTIA mission areas.
- **Faculty and Staff** – Stakeholder identified the challenge of recruiting and retaining qualified faculty and staff. There was also mention of an aging workforce and pending retirements.
- **Changing Industry** – Stakeholders noted rapid changes in the agriculture industry and profile of the farmer. The challenge for UTIA is keeping up with the changes.
- **Research Relevance** – Participants noted the challenge of continuing to focus on research that is relevant and applicable.
- **Other** – Other challenges include:
  - Keeping up with technology/ social media
  - Managing tuition costs, providing financial aid to students
  - Increasing urbanization
  - Maintaining effective youth development and engagement
  - Increasing competition

### STAKEHOLDER VOICE: CHALLENGES

*“The University Institute of Agriculture currently faces changes in expectations from government, industry, students and technology. It’s the rate of change in research, social media, data collection and economic fluctuation that demands the ability to adapt.”*

*“Maintaining adequate levels of funding.”*

*“Being able to obtain funds for agriculture research and the expansion of agriculture programs”*

*“Keeping good employees and staff, rewarding good employees and staff.”*

*“Agriculture and the opportunities for young people are changing quickly. UTIA needs to make sure we are not training students for the jobs that used to exist but the ones that will exist in the future.”*

*“Maintaining and strengthening relevance in*

## EXTERNAL TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholders were asked to describe in their own words “in your opinion, what are the greatest opportunities **within your sector** over the next ten years?”

Responses fell into the following thematic categories:

- **Industry** – Responses aligned with industry opportunities including specific themes related to Tennessee agriculture needs, value added marketing in the cattle industry, genetics, value add agriculture products, medicinal crops, and the national food supply.
- **Environment** – Responses tied to the environment related to opportunities to focus on water quality protection, renewable energy, land use, climate issues, and emphasis on the region.
- **Communities** – Themes within community development included programming around financial sustainability for families, entrepreneurship, homeowner gardener, and lawn/landscape,
- **Other** – Other opportunities include:
  - Building coalition of support within Tennessee agriculture community to help with advocacy
  - Improving outreach with 4-H activities

Stakeholders were asked to describe in their own words “in your opinion, what are the greatest opportunities **outside of your sector** over the next ten years?.”

Responses fell into the following thematic categories:

- **Financial Support** – Securing financial support was a consistent theme, mostly in relation to the ability to fund and compete for excellent faculty and staff.
- **Partnerships** – More partnerships and collaborations with industry
- **Information Dissemination** – Improve ways to disseminate information to the public
- **Alumni and Donors** – Increase connections with alumni and donors
- **Student Enrollment and Outcomes** – Leverage Tennessee Promise and industry need to grow enrollments in areas of need. Improve student success and employment outcomes of graduates.

### STAKEHOLDER VOICE: TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

*“Keep up with scientific knowledge advancements and apply them to specific problems of importance to producing and consuming public.”*

*“Development of young farmers, defining untapped ag markets and profits”*

*“The planet will have 10 billion people in the next 30 to 40 years. With current technology we cannot feed that many people....”*

*“The importance of our natural environment; the proper management of these natural resources; the maintaining of healthy forests, watersheds, bodies of water (streams, rivers, lakes, etc); the education of our citizenry to appreciate, respect, and support programs that impact all of our Tennessee natural resources.”*



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE

Stakeholders were asked to describe in their own words “what changes should occur over the next ten years to enable UTIA to overcome challenges and take advantage of opportunities?”

Responses fell into the following thematic categories:

- **Funding** – Focus on securing financial resources was the most frequent theme. Respondents recommended stronger state government advocacy to support this effort and evaluating the process to allocate funds.
- **Faculty and Staff** – Address salary and incentives to recruit and retain faculty and staff. Specific recommendations to fill gaps in the current staff were also provided.
- **Information/Outreach** – Incorporate social media to improve outreach and ability to provide information to users.
- **Priorities** – Concentrate on areas of focus related to relevant issues in the industry.
- **Partnerships** – Build more connections with corporations and other universities.
- **Other** – Other opportunities include:
  - Maintaining affordability for students
  - Continue to expand experiential learning opportunities
  - Expand online learning
  - Improve data to better track alumni

### STAKEHOLDER VOICE: CHANGE

*“Agricultural programs should be promoted and staff recruited to fill needed positions. Salaries for local staff should be improved. Perhaps a merit program or additional education to provide a ladder for salary increase.”*

*“Keep up with social media and technology”*

*“Increase funding for the TOP rated/producing programs.”*

*“Adapt to the expanding norm for on-line learning technologies while maintaining the personal connections with professors as teachers, leaders, and mentors who inspire students, and provide good role models for developing a vision for a career path..”*

*“Be as politically active as possible. Use advocacy groups to their fullest potential”*

*“Restructuring the funding to meet student demands for classes where interest is increasing”*