

April 2025

Faculty Volume



Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Roy Schmardebeck

When Dr. Roy Schmardebeck first learned about a faculty opening at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, he wasn't looking to leave

his previous institution. It was Halloween night, and he was preparing to take his kids trick-or-treating when he came across the job posting. Still, something nudged him to apply. That decision changed the trajectory of his career.

“From the moment I visited UT, I fell in love,” Schmardebeck said. “The Volunteer spirit reminded me of my undergraduate

experience, and the energy in the Haslam College of Business was contagious. I felt like I had found a new home.”

[Read More](#)



TLI Faculty Innovator Award

In Spring 2024, select faculty members received the Faculty Innovator Award for their creative teaching at UTK. Each month, we'll feature a new video from an award winner!

This month, we feature Dr. Jed Blanton, Director of Teaching Development at the College of Education, Health, and Human Services.





The Office of the Provost is accepting applications for its leadership development program for the 2025-2026 academic year. The program has two tracks: Leadership Acceleration and Development for Rising Stars (LADRS) and Leadership Enhancement and Peer Support (LEAPS).

Leadership Acceleration and Development for Rising Stars (LADRS) is designed for faculty who are interested in exploring and developing their leadership capacities and learning more about academic leadership opportunities and appointments. The program is for faculty who show significant promise as future academic administrators, including those who already engage in leadership by, for example, serving as a director of an academic program, chairing a significant faculty committee, or managing a successful lab. This program provides a comprehensive approach to leadership development and includes discussion of various leadership roles, responsibilities, and challenges.

Leadership Enhancement and Peer Support (LEAPS) is designed for department heads, school directors, associate deans, and other faculty who are serving in primarily full-time positions as academic administrators, including those in colleges without departments. This program is for existing academic faculty leaders who would like to engage in professional development and have a peer support network. This program provides a small leadership community to foster positive change for individuals and their units by assisting them in solving challenging leadership issues and providing a venue for them to give and receive feedback from their peers. Participants will also have opportunities to refine their leadership and management skills through focused reading and discussion.

Both tracks will have individual programming and group programming and are open to all full-time faculty (tenure-track and non-tenure-track). Please encourage emerging leaders in your unit to apply for LARDS and consider applying to the LEAPS track if you are interested in building a support network with other academic leaders. The application can be found [here](#). The deadline for submitting applications is April 28 and notifications will be sent by Mid-May.

Warm regards,

Veerle Keppens, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

Heidi Goodrich-Blair, Head, Department of Microbiology, LARDS co-lead

Jeff Pappas, Dean, School of Music, LARDS co-lead

Michael Higdon, Associate Dean, College of Law, LEAPS co-lead

Catherine Luther, Professor, LEAPS co-lead

TLI is Here to Help!

You can request TLI support in various areas via our [Service Request form](#). We offer several services for both individual instructors, as well as departments and colleges, including:

- Classroom Observations
- Course Design
- Document & Material Review
- Mid-Course Feedback
- End of Course Evaluation
- Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Support

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