

August 27, 2019



TO: Stacey Patterson, Vice President of Research, Outreach and Economic Development, University of Tennessee

FROM: Cortney Piper, President, Piper Communications

RE: Notes and observations from ORI@UT ideation session with UT faculty and staff

Piper Communications facilitated an ORI@UT ideation session with UT faculty and staff Monday, July 29, 2019. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Communicate information about ORI@UT → Its vision, the steps that will be taken to fully form its mission, objectives and business plan; as well as correct misinformation.
- Facilitate open dialogue to understand existing and perceived challenges related to UT/ORNL partnerships, so ORI@UT can address them.
- Provide a forum to understand successful UT/ORNL partnerships from the inception of the UT-Battelle relationship, so ORI@UT can build on these foundational partnerships.
- Generate overarching scientific and technical ideas from attendees about what subject matter, big problems or technical ideas ORI@UT should address that will leverage the collective expertise and infrastructure at UT and ORNL.

The notes from the session are included in this memo. The notes provide a comprehensive transcript of the meeting and capture the information shared by attendees from group exercises. In addition, some of the unanswered questions raised during discussions are also documented.

The following provides a summary of main themes relevant to the launch of ORI@UT.

Theme #1: Communication

This theme came up both as an element of a successful UT/ORNL partnership and a challenge. Variations of this theme included: trust, transparency, clearly defined roles and reporting. Unity around a common goal across campuses and vision was mentioned as a marker of a successful ORNL/UT partnership, and communication is important to that.

Attendees also expressed concerns about not knowing *exactly* what ORI@UT was or how it would affect them and their department. At the meeting, it was communicated that those decisions have not been made.

Theme #2: Organizational structure and leadership matters

Several times, attendees expressed a desire to know and understand the organization structure, leadership arrangements and budget flow of ORI before brainstorming subject matter related ideas.

Whether real or perceived, concerns about organizational structure, partnership arrangements, inclusion, budgets and internal competition, if not addressed, can impact the research outcomes and subject matter of ORI@UT.

Theme #3: UT currently has (or has the ability to recruit) top human capital to address the subject matter envisioned by ORI@UT

The state's institutional assets (University of Tennessee, Oak Ridge National Lab/DOE and Tennessee Valley Authority), interdisciplinary opportunities, quality of life and the chance to build something new coupled with big, bold visions for ORI@UT will keep and draw talent to the region.

UT attendees gravitated around four big, bold ideas for ORI@UT.

1. Climate change and clean energy—Tennessee's research and institutional assets, along with its biodiversity make it a unique place to address these global problems. Additionally, addressing this subject matter includes each and every department at UT across many campuses.
2. Healthcare informatics—Tennesseans face many healthcare problems that plague other parts of the country (e.g., addiction, obesity, diabetes) and therefore we are in a unique position to address these challenges. UT brings the clinical science piece to a potential partnership. It also presents an opportunity to educate more young people in STEM fields by using a subject matter with very real community impact. Similar to the first topic, this initiative will bring the expertise and infrastructure from all campuses.
3. Cybersecurity—Extends beyond national security to advanced manufacturing, autonomous transportation, transactional payments, etc. Because the connectivity of our world has skyrocketed, this subject matter is highly inclusive of UT departments including law, policy and ethics, as well as, new infrastructures at ORNL.
4. Quantum materials/information science—This subject matter can make Tennessee a leader in the development of a new "breed" of scientist focusing on both materials and also computational mathematics frameworks. ORI@UT can make foundational contributions to society like World Wide Web development at CERN in Europe.

Observations & Potential Next Steps

There is great enthusiasm for making UT, ORNL and Tennessee a leader in solving some of the biggest technical and educational challenges our society faces today.

It's also clear that placing an emphasis on how UT partnerships are structured and organized will yield better research and student outcomes, bigger ideas to address and more impactful problems to solve. UT currently has (or has the ability to recruit) the human capital to realize the potential of ORI@UT. What's lacking is a structure or peer-to-peer working relationship to maximize those assets.

Potential next steps include:

1. Scheduling an **ORNL ideation session** as soon as possible to obtain similar information from ORNL's perspective, blending ideas from both sessions will add tremendous value to the ORI@UT business plan.
2. Drafting **mission and vision statements** that will govern ORI@UT, a more comprehensive iteration of what was defined in the board resolution and briefing documents for government officials.
3. A **detailed internal communications plan** for ORI@UT is a good step to give ORI a solid foundation, build unity among internal stakeholders and send the message to UT faculty that this will be different and UT hears their concerns. An internal communication plan creates a centralized source of credible information about ORI@UT so leadership can spend their time executing the vision, rather than correcting rumors and misinformation.

A few elements of an internal communications plan may include:

- Shared messaging about ORI@UT across the campuses
- Identify existing and new mechanisms to communicate information about ORI@UT and create a schedule to use them. For example: UT/ORNL ideation sessions, UT Faculty Senate, ORI@tennessee.edu email, etc.
- A shared timeline for the development of ORI@UT so stakeholders know when and how to provide input.
- A webpage to serve as the single source of information about ORI and its progress; share this webpage via email with the appropriate stakeholders.
- Expand the ORI@UT leadership structure beyond the co-chairs to include a more intimate representation of those present at the ideation session(s). The purpose of this group is to provide feedback on plans as they are developed and before the November 8th business plan deadline.
- Identify a list of individuals to meet with one-on-one about ORI@UT.



Cortney Piper, President
Piper Communications