



THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
Oak Ridge
Innovation Institute

UT-ORII Overview

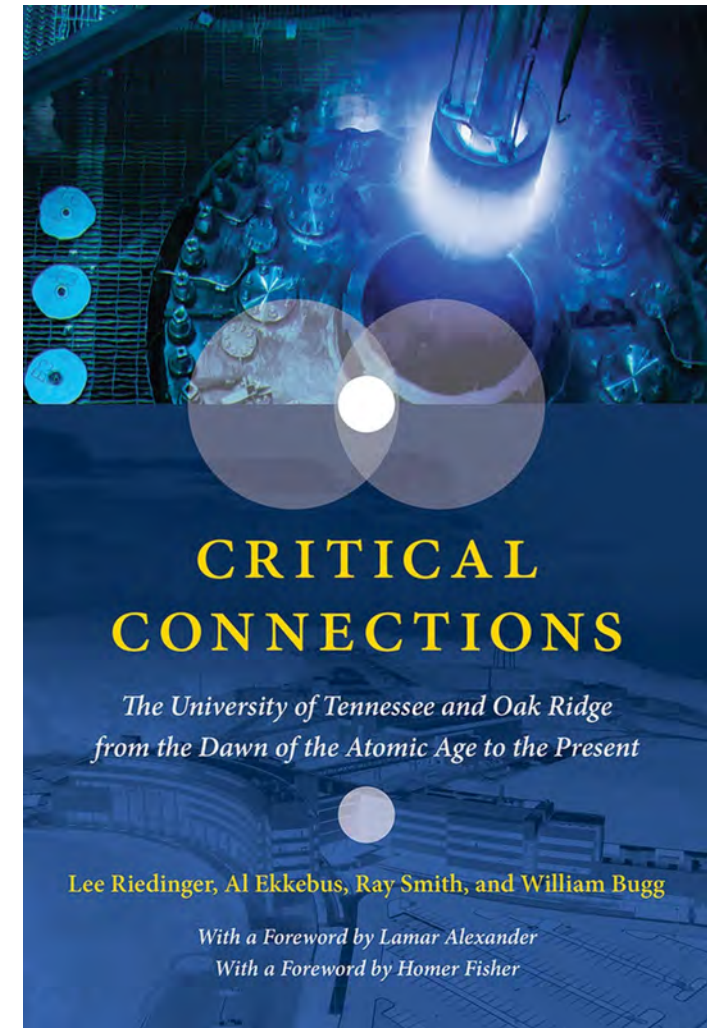
David Sholl – Executive Director

October 15, 2025

Background

UT-ORII's mission is to elevate the reputation of UT and ORNL through joint research and education programs

- Long history of ORNL/UT collaborations
- Complex set of siloed engagements
- Opportunity to increase impact by coordinating programs
- Opportunity to leverage significant support from State of Tennessee and DOE
- *UT-ORII established on July 15, 2020, through a MOU between the UT System and ORNL*



UT-ORII will...

- Enhance UT System and ORNL's reputations
- Combine expertise to drive research advances
- Elevate UT's PhD programs
- Recruit and retain top-level STEM talent
- Contribute to Tennessee's sustained economic development
- Drive K-12 outreach in TN
- Strengthen UT's core academic units & ORNL's existing groups
- Provide hub for UT-ORNL interactions



**STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2028**



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE | **Oak Ridge Innovation Institute**

Financial drivers for UT-ORII

Our ambitious goals are underpinned by strong support from the state and other partners

- State investment is intended to drive long-term economic development in Tennessee
- These resources are viewed as seed funds; in all cases, we need to develop sustained external funding
- Convergent Research Initiatives were chosen with strong expected ROI

**\$80M one-time
funds from
state of TN**

**\$20M DOE
EERE
(workforce
dev.)**

**>\$10M annual
funds from
state of TN**

**Targeted
LDRD funds
at ORNL**



UT-ORII leadership



David Sholl

ORNL

Executive Director
and Vice Provost



Brynn Voy

UTK

Education Director



Shawn Campagna

UTK

Director of Scientific
Programs



Collaboration & Progress in 3 Core Areas



Research



***Graduate
Education***



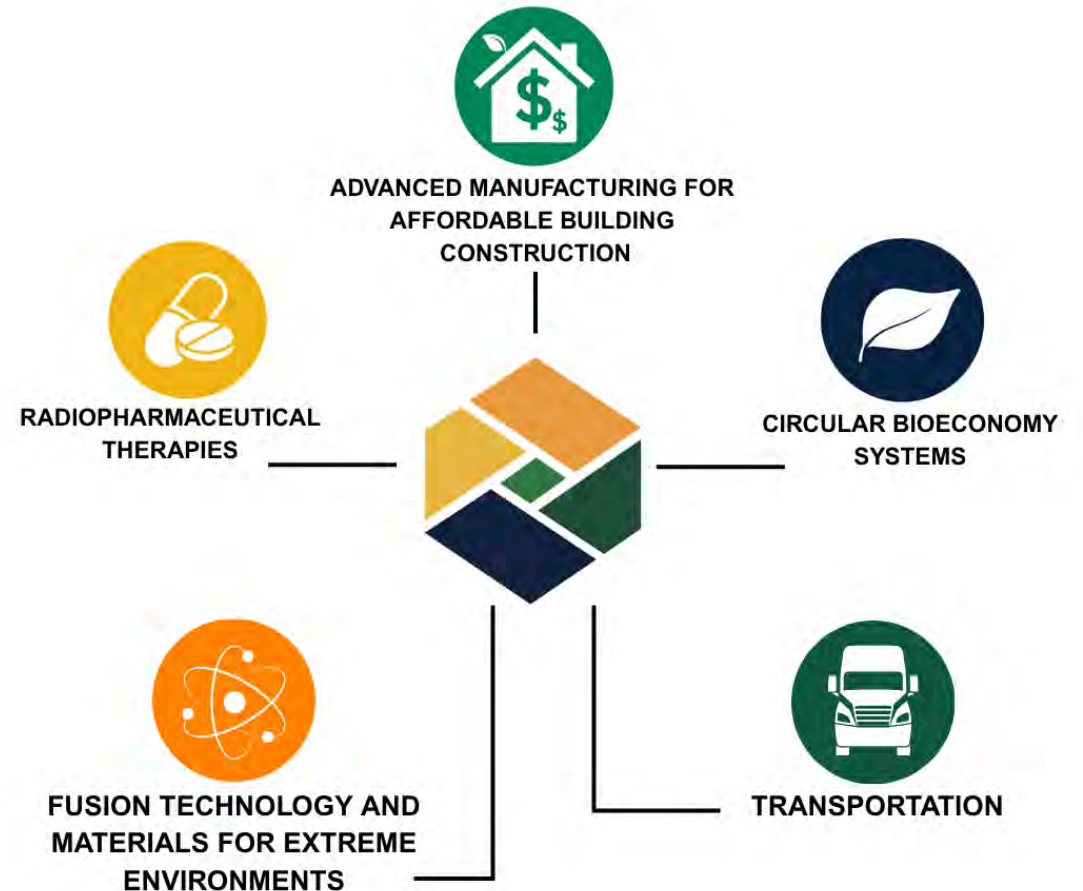
***Workforce & Economic
Development***



UT-ORII Convergent Research Initiatives (CRIs)

Leveraging ORNL + UT strengths to tackle some of world's biggest STEM challenges and bring new funds to Tennessee

- New research staff at ORNL/research faculty at UT
- LDRD investments at ORNL



UTK Science Alliance

THEC Center of Excellence with funds spent at UTK to encourage & develop collaborations with ORNL

- \$2.2M awarded in AY24-25
- > \$30M in external proposals submitted to date
- Seed projects aligned with UT-ORII CRIs
- GATE fellowships to high performing PhD students



Governor's Chairs Program

Long-standing program to hire exceptional research leaders jointly appointed at UT and ORNL to drive cross-institution collaborations



Gobet Advincula



Robert Davis



Terry Hazen



Yilu Liu



Art Ragauskas



Jeremy Smith



Alexei Sokolov



Uday Vaidya



Robert Williams



Brian Wirth



Tom Zawodzinski



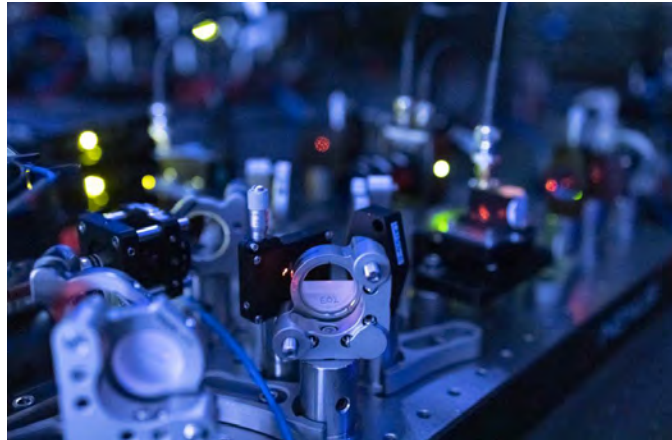
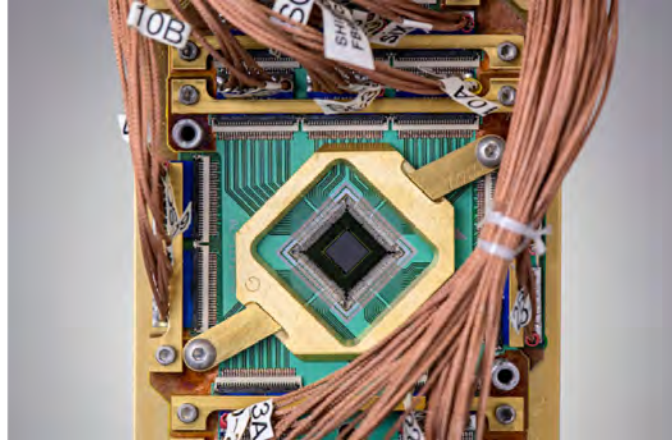
Steve Zinkle

Governor's Chairs advise more than 5% of all UTK PhD students



Searches for New Governor's Chairs

- **Quantum Information Sciences – Algorithms/Computation**
Joint search by UTC/ORNL
- **Quantum Information Sciences – Devices/Materials**
Joint search by UTK/ORNL
- **Circular Bioeconomy Systems**
Joint search by UTIA/UTK/ORNL
- **Nuclear Medicine**
Joint search by UTK/UTHSC/ORNL



Collaboration & Progress in 3 Core Areas



Research



***Graduate
Education***



***Workforce & Economic
Development***





Graduate education

Attracting the best and brightest

- **Strategic goal: 500 PhD students participating with UT-ORII and ORNL by 2028**
- UT-ORII manages the UT-ORNL Bredesen Center with 3 PhD programs (Energy Science and Engineering, Data Science and Engineering, Genome Science and Technology)
- Facilitate growth in other UT graduate programs via interactions with ORNL
- Financial support for new students for 1 year, then advisors support students
- 265 UT PhD students in Bredesen Center or other departments received UT-ORII funding in AY24-25



Collaboration & Progress in 3 Core Areas



Research



***Graduate
Education***



***Workforce & Economic
Development***



SMaRT Summer Internship Program



- 10-week program of hands-on research at UT and ORNL
- 40 undergraduate interns in summer 2025
- Students from 28 different universities (5 in TN and 23 out of state)



Ready! Set! Stemovate!



- Sixth-grade pilot completed in Cocke, Cumberland, Overton, Crockett counties – 350 students
- STEM activities for entire school year
- Expanding to 22 counties this year
- Planning state-wide expansion in partnership with UTB



OAK RIDGE INSTITUTE
FOR SCIENCE AND EDUCATION



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STRATEGIC PLAN
2023-2028





*Want to stay updated on the
UT-Oak Ridge
Innovation Institute?*

www.utorii.com

Email us: utorii@tennessee.edu

