UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

November 13, 2026

By email only to: contact@legalinsurrection.com

William Jacobson

Re: University of Tennessee – OCR Complaint Number 04-26-2167

Dear William Jacobson:

On January 6, 2026, the U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office for Civil Rights (OCR) received the above-referenced complaint against the University of Tennessee (University). Your complaint alleges that the University discriminates on the bases of race, color, and/or national origin by offering and administering the scholarships below (collectively, "Scholarships").

1. UT Battelle Minority Scholarship
2. Messer Construction DESP Scholarship
3. Fred D. Brown, Jr. Memorial Engineering Scholarship/Fellowship Endowment
4. Charles Lattimore Scholarship

OCR enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), 42 U.S.C. Sections 2000d-2000d-7, and its implementing regulation, 34 C.F.R. Part 100, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the Department. As a recipient of federal financial assistance from the Department, the University must comply with Title VI and its implementing regulations.

OCR will investigate the following legal issue:

> Whether the University discriminates on the basis of race, color, or national origin with respect to the Scholarships, in violation of Title VI.

Please note that opening an investigation in no way implies that OCR has made a determination with regard to the merits. During the investigation, OCR is a neutral factfinder, collecting and analyzing relevant evidence from the complainant, the recipient, and other sources, as appropriate. OCR will ensure that its investigation is legally sufficient as required by Case Processing Manual (CPM) (Feb. 19, 2025). Individuals who file complaints with OCR may have the right to file a private suit in federal court whether or not OCR finds a violation.

Please be advised that the University must not harass, coerce, intimidate, discriminate, or otherwise retaliate against any individual because that individual asserts a right or privilege

under a law enforced by OCR or files a complaint, testifies, assists, or participates in a proceeding under a law enforced by OCR. If this happens, the individual may file a retaliation complaint with OCR.

Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), it may be necessary to release this document and related correspondence and records upon request. If OCR receives such a request, OCR will seek to protect, to the extent provided by law, personally identifiable information that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if released.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Stephanie Pessin, the OCR staff person assigned to this complaint, at [redacted].

Sincerely,

/s/ Andrea de Vries

Andrea de Vries
Compliance Team Leader