



Tennessee Temple University & Piedmont International University Merger: Key Questions & Answers

Tennessee Temple is planning a merger with Piedmont International University pending approval from the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools. We anticipate God to bless the merger with PIU, and we understand you may have some questions. Here are the answers to the immediate questions you may be asking. As other questions come forth, we will be updating this document.

1. What is Tennessee Temple University's connection to Piedmont International University? Why would TTU consider merging with a school in North Carolina?

Established in the mid-1940s, the two universities have a strong connection that stretches back to their founders, Dr. Charles Stevens and Dr. Lee Roberson. The forefathers were close friends who echoed each other's founding visions. Remarkably, Dr. Roberson once told Dr. Howard Wilburn, then president of Piedmont, "Dr. Stevens and I were great friends, and we established Piedmont and Tennessee Temple within months of each other. The two of us had a gentlemen's agreement that if either school ever faltered, the two would come together." Others have also cited Dr. Roberson making mention of this agreement.

"Little did our founders know that their pledge of support to each other would find fruition nearly 70 years later," said Echols. "Merging with Piedmont International University is a once in a generation opportunity. Piedmont International is a well-respected, outstanding Christian institution of higher education whose impact through the years for the cause of Christ is immeasurable."

Before being led to PIU, TTU had approached and investigated several schools about possible partnerships. Generally speaking, other institutions preferred an acquisition rather than a merger. However, in an acquisition, TTU would have given up its programs but retained its financial obligations. An acquisition has the same effect financially of simply closing the institution, which costs several hundred thousand dollars. Unless it was the only option, the board would not have been fulfilling its fiduciary responsibility to approve an acquisition due to the costs involved. TTU leadership prefers to use our assets to continue to invest in the lives of our students.

On the other hand, a merger removes the costs associated with an acquisition or the closure of the institution, and is much simpler to accomplish in many respects. One key aspect of a merger is that the institution with which we partner must offer programs at the same educational levels that TTU currently has, including associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Merging with a school that does not have associate's degree programs all the way through doctoral programs was not feasible and would have eliminated, especially online, TTU's strongest programs. Needless to say, finding a school which met this requirement and other accreditation criteria, coupled with a willingness to take on the challenges of a merger with TTU, was difficult. We are grateful that PIU meets the academic criteria and is willing to merge. PIU also has an impressive history of two other successful mergers.



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We believe that God provided Piedmont International University as the best possible option for TTU to continue to carry out its purpose. Ecclesiastes 4: 9 declares that “two are better than one.” In this case, the two schools coming together in a partnership is better than what both institutions could do alone. Merging the two schools will save greatly on costs in that there will be only one infrastructure. However, even more important is the synergy that will occur as the staffs, faculty members and constituents all pull together for the same purpose. PIU is an outstanding Christian higher education institution whose graduates have reached thousands for Christ. TTU is pleased to be able to join with a school that is so greatly respected for its contributions to the Kingdom. We believe God has wonderful things in store for the new combined institution.

2. Was the infeasibility of relocating to Woodland Park Baptist Church a significant reason for the planned merger?

Yes, extensive analysis of the university’s finances led the trustees and other leadership of TTU to realize that the school could not continue successfully at its present location. The move to the campus of Woodland Park Baptist Church would have relieved TTU from the financial burden of its current campus. However, the school encountered a series of negative events within a matter of weeks from mid-June through August 2014 which made relocation no longer a financially feasible option:

- A contract on the DeMoss dorms and two other properties fell through. The contract was worth as much as 3 million dollars more than TTU was able to secure as the final sale price. The firm TTU was dealing with has a reputation for following through to closure with contracts. A series of very unusual factors caused them to retract the agreement. The firm’s due diligence demonstrated that TTU had few options for the remaining property. At the same time, another potential contract on additional property also fell through. TTU was fortunate to sell the remaining properties, even though it was for significantly less money.
- Anticipated donations of \$2 million from foundations, business leaders, and alumni for the Bridge to the Future Campaign did not materialize. Less than 1% of alumni responded to a 17,000 brochure and letter mail out, with non-trustee alumni giving less than \$65,000. Although TTU had hoped the response would be greater, we are mindful and respect that many TTU alumni are faithful tithers and committed to giving toward special missions and/or appeals at their churches, making it difficult to contribute to other causes.
- TTU encountered ongoing issues with the EPA, hindering the university’s ability to purchase land or execute a loan agreement from our bank. Other factors also caused a delay of one year from TTU’s original relocation time-table, costing the school more than \$1.5 million dollars due to continued overhead costs at the current campus and rising costs of the construction of the new campus.
- TTU’s athletic program was impacted by the resignation of the school’s very capable and popular former athletic director due to unexpected immigration issues, resulting in his return to England. His departure coupled with the loss of several other coaches within a short period of time due to family and personal reasons, resulted in 70 fewer athletes in the fall of 2014 in comparison to a year prior, leading to significant financial loss.



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3. How did TTU, once one of the largest Christian institutions of higher education, come to a place of a merger?

The school reached its largest enrollment of 4,000 students in 1980. By 1992, enrollment was down to approximately 650 students. During that 12 year decline, millions of dollars of endowment were liquidated, and the school was teetering on the edge of closure. The past 22 years have been a continual struggle to stay open. Key gifts and sales of assets have allowed the school to stay one step away from closure. However, continual deferred maintenance has come to such a level that the current campus is no longer economically viable. The new location promised hope, but unfortunately the series of events described above hindered the start of this new era.

4. Why did the leadership of TTU not publically discuss the possibility of a merger?

In the last several months, it has always been the prayer and hope that resources could be found to make the move to the new campus. At the same time, alternative plans had to be explored if the new campus was no longer a viable option. These alternatives, while in their unconfirmed state, were not discussed publicly in order to avoid wide-spread confusion. Additionally, much of what was explored had to remain confidential until agreements could be finalized. Therefore, not wanting to potentially forfeit positive opportunities, TTU administrators could not openly speculate about various alternatives. In addition, any such discussion would have carried legal consequences as well as the potential loss of federal funds. The leadership of TTU never ceased to pray for God's provision, asking Him for wisdom and guidance to solve the challenges the school faced. Only now that the positive opportunity of a merger has become a reality is it appropriate to make a public announcement.

5. Has the alternative of being a commuter-only school been explored?

Yes, however, TTU has already sold its current campus, and securing a new location would create additional overhead that could not be viably supported given TTU's small population of commuter students. Additionally, the amount of space required to house the library, classrooms, and administration makes the idea of a church providing "free space" difficult. Even if space were donated with maintenance, utilities, insurance, etc. included, the low number of commuter students would not support the personnel required. Additionally, over half of commuters are members of athletic teams who would not likely remain at Tennessee Temple without an athletic program. Furthermore, the majors of commuter students are so varied it would require the entire current faculty to maintain their education, preventing the university from consolidating.

6. Has the option of being an online-only school been explored?

Yes, although it seems counter-intuitive, offering online-only programs is surprisingly expensive. The number of faculty and the amount of other support required by accreditation, as well as the technical costs and advertisement costs, are substantial. These costs would exceed the revenue produced by TTU's current base of online students. Additionally, without a residential program, TTU would likely lose a considerable number of its current online students. A significant number of online students want to have a brick and mortar residential school as a potential alma mater.



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7. What will happen to current TTU students?

With administrative duplication eliminated and other costs savings in place as a result of the merger, TTU students will be able to take advantage of a much lower tuition rate. PIU is offering a very gracious scholarship program to TTU students. A one-third discount will be offered not only to current TTU students but also to any student who has taken courses in the past at TTU. The discount will also apply to the children and even grandchildren of TTU students.

Residential students may choose to move to PIU's Winston-Salem campus or to complete their educations through PIU's online learning program. Additionally, they may take advantage of teach-out provisions at either Shorter University in Rome, GA or Bryan College in Dayton, TN. In both cases, TTU students will be able to attend either college at a comparable cost and with an unaffected graduation date. We are deeply grateful to these institutions for graciously extending these opportunities to TTU students.

Through the merger, TTU students will also have an enhanced opportunity in terms of overall educational experience. Our entire online program will be transferred intact to PIU. Online students will have the advantage of continuing their education with their same professors or enjoying the opportunity to take courses from the current PIU faculty. Students will find that PIU offers a wide curriculum and a stellar faculty. Students who decide to take advantage of the teach-out options at Shorter University or Bryan College will also have a wide array of options.

8. What will happen to the TTU legacy and memorabilia?

Crown College in Knoxville, TN is graciously providing space to honor the legacy of Dr. Lee Roberson. PIU will also have an area on campus designated for TTU memorabilia. Additionally, having the Temple Baptist Seminary as part of its university is a significant way for PIU to maintain the TTU legacy. PIU further plans to include TTU alumni in its alumni organization. A special effort will be made to have events for TTU alumni and to develop a commonality and fellowship between the constituents of PIU and TTU.

9. What will happen to faculty and staff?

TTU will continue to pay most workers through April. Some employees will remain during the transition period. Some faculty, staff, and administrators have been offered positions with PIU. Faculty will be paid in full for their teaching loads. As funds are available, most staff will be eligible for severance. Upon termination of their employment due to the merge, TTU employees will be eligible for unemployment.

10. What will happen to the records of the students?

TTU and Temple Academy records will be housed at PIU. Alumni and current students will be able to request TTU transcripts through Piedmont International University.



11. What will happen to WDYN?

Piedmont International University will become the owner of the radio station. Currently there are no plans to change any aspect of its operation.

12. Will TTU be able to merge with Piedmont without any outstanding debts?

Yes, the sale of the property has already paid off several million dollars' worth of TTU's debt. Remaining debts will be cleared before the merge. All accounts are current and all creditors will continue to be paid in full.

13. What should be the focus of the TTU family at this time?

In accordance with Isaiah 40:8— “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever”— all entities and institutions in this world are temporary. Only the universal church and His Kingdom are forever. As a single entity, TTU had a glorious season dedicated to the cause of Christ. What was accomplished in His name is eternal. Now TTU has an opportunity to join with a like-minded institution for another season of God's work. Although God has ended the time for TTU as a stand-alone entity, there is no doubt that His work will persist through a partnership that will continue to train men and women for Christian ministry in the years to come. We have the wonderful opportunity to fervently pray for and give our support to a new partnership that will open new doors through which we will see lives transformed for the glory of God.

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