

Bernard J. Savarese

Vice President
Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Success

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education (EdD), Leadership and Innovation

New York University

New York, New York

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

The Ohio State University

Columbus, Ohio

- Recognized as a Weider Scholar for Distinguished Academic Performance

Master of Arts (MA), College Student Personnel

Bowling Green State University

Bowling Green, Ohio

- Recipient of the President's Award for Distinguished Service

Bachelor of Arts (BA), Political Science – with Honors in the Liberal Arts

The Ohio State University

Columbus, Ohio

UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Vice President for Academic Affairs, Research, and Student Success

2022 – Present

The University of Tennessee

The University of Tennessee (UT) is the state's land-grant university system, enrolling over 64,000 students through its campuses in Knoxville (R1), Chattanooga, Pulaski, and Martin; the UT Health Science Center in Memphis (R1), and the statewide Institute of Agriculture and Institute for Public Service. The UT System awards over 12,500 degrees annually, has an endowment of over \$1.3 billion, generates more than \$525 million in annual research expenditures, and has an economic impact of over \$4 billion annually on the state of Tennessee.

Since joining UT, we have experienced record success systemwide:

- **Student Success:** record enrollment (+20.2%), retention (+4.5%), and 4-year graduation rates (+10.2%)
- **Access & Affordability:** 55% of undergraduate students now graduate debt free
- **Research Expenditures:** consecutive years of record research expenditures (+21.5%)
- **Academic Program Development:** record numbers of new and innovative academic programs and units, with more than 45 approved and implemented since 2022

DIRECT REPORTS:

- Academic and Faculty Affairs
- Academic Systems and Operations
- Research
- National Laboratory Relations
- Student Success and Workforce Pathways
- Access and Engagement
- Institutional Effectiveness
- The Office of the Chief Wellness Officer

CAMPUS LIAISONS:

- Provosts and Chief Academic Officers
- Vice Chancellors for Research
- Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs
- Vice Chancellors for Access & Engagement
- Vice Provosts for Enrollment Management
- Vice Provosts for Institutional Research

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- **University Leadership:** Serve as the university's Chief Academic Officer, reporting to the President and serving as a member of his Executive Leadership Team; work in partnership with the campus Chancellors and institute Vice Presidents to advance high-quality academic experiences and student outcomes
- **System and Statewide Partnerships:**
 - Regularly convene campus Provosts, Vice Chancellors for Research, and Vice Chancellors for Student Affairs - ensuring alignment, deepening partnerships, and driving outcomes tied to UT's 2030 goals
 - Serve as the university's liaison to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, the Tennessee Board of Regents, and the Tennessee Departments of Education and Labor and Workforce Development
- **Academic Programs and Tenure:** Oversee the development and submission of all new academic programs and units, ensuring alignment with workforce needs; coordinate the consideration and approval of all tenure cases; support and report on the university's post-tenure review process
- **Faculty Leadership and Shared Governance:** Work with the President to regularly convene the University Faculty Council (UFC) - representing faculty senate leaders from each campus; actively address topics including university policy, government relations, and student success
- **Government Relations and Advocacy:** Actively engage with local and state government leaders on topics ranging from academic programs and student outcomes to workforce partnerships and research innovation
- **Board of Trustees Liaison:** Serve as the principal liaison, providing leadership and guidance to the Board's Education, Research, and Service (ERS) Committee; develop and present committee materials
- **Enrollment Management:** Chair the university's inaugural strategic enrollment council, coordinating systemwide enrollment planning across five campuses; UT has experienced record enrollment since 2021 and is on pace to exceed its 2030 goal of 71,000 students
- **Strategic Planning:** Lead the university's most recent strategic planning effort ("Be One UT 2030"), chairing the executive steering committee, overseeing the plan's development, and managing the plan's ongoing implementation and reporting
- **Enterprise Solutions:** Serve as the executive sponsor for two active systemwide implementations:
 - Oracle's cloud-based Student Information System – Oracle's largest systemwide implementation
 - Huron's cloud-based suite designed to modernize and simplify research administration
- **Research and National Laboratories Leadership:**
 - Lead the team in coordination of all research administration, policy, and security efforts; champion and incentivize research collaboration that advances scholarship, discovery, and our land-grant mission
 - Oversee the university's relationships with Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), the U.S. Department of Energy, and the Battelle Memorial Institute on matters related to the UT-Battelle management and operations contract for ORNL

Associate Vice President for Student Success The University of Tennessee

2021 – 2022

Served as the university's chief student success officer; **elevated to Vice President within 9 months:**

- Led collaborative efforts to improve student outcomes and elevate the student experience across all university campuses and institutes
- Regularly convened campus counterparts including vice chancellors for student affairs and vice chancellors/vice provosts for student success - ensuring alignment, deepening partnerships, and actively advancing initiatives tied to the university's strategic goals
- Directed the implementation and ongoing enhancement of affordability efforts including the **UT Promise** – an innovative scholarship program providing free tuition and fees, mentorship, and cohort-based engagement activities to Tennesseans earning less than \$75,000
- Led statewide efforts to improve access and degree pathways including **Tennessee Reconnect** – helping more community college transfer students earn a credential, and the **Tennessee Transfer Pathways Program** – supporting seamless statewide transfer efforts

**Assistant Vice President for Student Success and the Student Experience
New York University (NYU)**

2017 – 2021

With campuses in New York City, Abu Dhabi (UAE), and Shanghai (China), NYU is among the largest private universities in the world. The university enrolls more than 62,000 students, has an endowment of over \$5.9 billion, and research expenditures totaling over \$1.5 billion annually.

While serving as the inaugural chief student success officer, NYU experienced record increases in student outcomes following efforts to better coordinate operations and personnel, leverage data insights, and focus resources across decentralized units/campuses:

- **Record First-Year Retention:** 94.4% (Fall 2020 cohort)
- **Record Six-Year Graduation:** 88.4% (Fall 2014 cohort)

DIRECT REPORTS:

- Student Success Outreach and Support
- Center for Student Success Insights
- Financial Education
- Higher Education Opportunity Program
- Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholars
- NYU's Gould Welcome Center
- Academic Resource Center
- Student Veteran Transition and Success
- Student Success Communications
- NYU Connect

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Administrative Innovation:** Led the development of a new, multi-unit Division of Student Success charged with coordinating, integrating, and elevating the student experience and improving outcomes
- **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Chaired NYU's inaugural Student Success Steering committee comprised of leaders from both academic and administrative units; drove proactive outreach and coordinated student support efforts impacting students in all colleges and schools
- **Enterprise Systems:** Oversaw the development and deployment of NYU's first enterprise-wide student success platform, NYU Connect (powered by EAB), enabling enhanced advising, case management, and timely outreach to the students most in need of support
- **Data-Informed Practice:** Launched NYU's Center for Student Success Insights – a unit charged with empowering campus partners with actionable data and developing strategic interventions
- **Student Success:** Oversaw critical cohort-based programs meant to address achievement gaps and enhance engagement, including the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholars Program and the state-funded Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) – HEOP students' outcomes regularly exceeded those of the university, reaching record first-year retention (97%) and graduation rates (90%) in the Fall of 2021

**Director, The First-Year Experience
The Ohio State University**

2012 –2017

The Ohio State University is the state's flagship and land-grant university, with campuses in Columbus, Newark, Marion, Mansfield, and Lima. The university enrolls more than 66,000 students, awards over 17,000 degrees annually, has an endowment of over \$7.9 billion, and research expenditures totaling over \$1.5 billion each year.

Record First-Year Retention:

- While serving as the university's senior administrator for new students and students in transition, Ohio State experienced **record first-year retention** rates in consecutive years, culminating in a rate of **95%** (Fall 2016 cohort)

DIRECT REPORTS:

- First Year Experience
- University Orientation
- Academic Initiatives (e.g., First-Year Seminar)
- Pre-Enrollment and Summer Bridge Programs
- Student Success Analytics
- Campus Visits and Events
- Undergraduate Admissions (interim leadership: 2010; 2017)

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Increased Scope and Responsibility:** Led an area that grew to be unique in size and scope, including undergraduate admissions, the campus visit experience, pre-enrollment and summer bridge programs, university orientation, and first-year academic initiatives including OSU's First-Year Seminar course
- **Innovative Family Support:** Pioneered the university's robust outreach and support for first-year families; these efforts later expanded to become the university's Office of Parent and Family Relations
- **Organizational Change:** Led an innovative effort to transform the focus of the First-Year Experience from large-scale programming to one that included targeted outreach and support powered by data-informed insights, allowing for a personalized and scalable approach to student success at one of the largest universities in the country
- **Data-Informed Strategy:** Launched a new team of data analysts, introduced new assessments and technology-based tools, and hired a new team of peer leaders to engage in year-round outreach/support
- **Executive Guidance:** Regularly convened and advised the Senior Vice President for Student Life, the Vice President for Enrollment Management, and the Dean of Undergraduate Education on matters of student success and the student experience
- **Second-Year Experience:** Served on a multi-year task force that created OSU's novel second-year experience program – grounded in faculty mentorship and funded engagement in high-impact practices
- **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Chaired the university's inaugural Standing Committee on Student Success and Retention – a joint effort between academic affairs, student affairs, and enrollment management

ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

The Ohio State University

- Interim Director, Undergraduate Admissions and First Year Experience 2012
- Associate Director, Undergraduate Admissions and First Year Experience 2010 – 2012
- Assistant Director, Center for Student Leadership and Service 2009 – 2010
- Director, Residential Learning Communities 2008 – 2009
- Assistant Director, Residence Life 2006 – 2008
- Residence Hall Director 2002 – 2006

Bowling Green State University

- Assistant to the Chair, College Student Personnel Program 2001 – 2002
- Residence Hall Director 2000 – 2001

SELECT INSTITUTES & CERTIFICATIONS

- **Institute for Educational Management** – Harvard University's Graduate School of Education 2024
- **Enrollment Leadership Academy** – The College Board 2018
- **Institute on College Admissions** – Harvard University 2017

SELECT TEACHING & ADVISING

Developed original courses and curricula, including on-line and hybrid offerings; mentored and advised undergraduate and graduate students while serving on doctoral review committees.

TEACHING

- Adjunct Assistant Professor, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville 2023 – Present
 - Higher Education Administration 629: *Policy Issues in Higher Education*
 - Higher Education Administration 624: *Students in Postsecondary Education*
- Instructor, *First-Year Seminar*, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville 2022
- Instructor, *First-Year Seminar*, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholars, New York University 2018 – 2021
- Instructor, *Strategic Planning for Your FYE Program*, The National Resource Center 2013
for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition, The University of South Carolina
- Instructor, *Leadership in the Public and Nonprofit Sectors*, The Ohio State University 2011 – 2014

ADVISING

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholars Program, New York University 2018 – 2021
- Student Success Advisory Council, New York University 2017 – 2021
- BuckeyeThon – The Ohio State University's Dance Marathon 2009 – 2011
- Black Student Association, The Ohio State University 2003 – 2006
- Residence Hall Advisory Councils (3), The Ohio State University 2002 – 2006

BOARD SERVICE

- Board of Directors, The Ohio State University Alumni Association 2019 – Present
 - Chair (2023 – Present); Vice Chair (2021 – 2023); Committee Chair (2020 – 2022)
- National Association of Higher Education Systems (NASH), Enrollment Advisory Board 2025 – Present
- The National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition 2022 – Present
 - National Advisory Board Member
- National Advisory Board for Common Reading Programs, Penguin Random House 2016 – Present
- Student Success Innovation Council, EAB (formerly the Education Advisory Board) 2021 – 2023
- Strategic Advisory Board, Starfish/Hobsons 2021 – 2023
- Board of Directors, Neighborhood Services Food Pantry, Columbus, Ohio 2009 – 2013
 - Vice President (2012 – 2013); Secretary (2011 – 2012)
- Board of Directors, Stadium Scholarship Program Alumni Society, The Ohio State University 2002 – 2006
 - President (2004 – 2006); Secretary (2003 – 2004)

SELECT AWARDS & RECOGNITION

- President's Making a Difference Award, New York University 2018
- Forty Under 40, Columbus Business First, Columbus, Ohio 2016
- Faculty and Staff Excellence Award, The Ohio State University 2005, 2008, 2010, 2015, 2016
- Enrollment Management Innovation Award, The Ohio State University 2016
- Student Alumni Council, Honorary Member, The Ohio State University 2015
- Bucket & Dipper Sophomore Class Honorary, Honorary Member, The Ohio State University 2014
- Outstanding Achievement Award, The Ohio State University Office of Student Life 2008
- Outstanding New Professional, Great Lakes Association of College and University Housing Officers 2004
- President's Award for Distinguished Service, Bowling Green State University 2002

SELECT SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

- Keynote, 31st National Conference on Student in Transition: *The Undoing Project: Beyond the Lessons of the First-Year Experience* (October 2024)
- Keynote, Association of College Honor Societies – the Dorothy Mitstifer Lecture: *Burnout in Today's Higher Education & Honor Society Times* (February 1, 2024)
- Commencement Speaker, the University of Tennessee (Spring 2023 to Present)
- Featured Speaker, Recruitment and Yield Events, New York University (Fall 2018 – Fall 2021)
- Opening Speaker and Featured Panelist, EAB Student Success Summit. New York, New York: *Looking at Success through a Unified Lens* (April 2019)
- Keynote and Featured Panelist, The University of Tennessee System, Academic and Student Affairs Summit. Knoxville, TN: *Belonging and Student Success at Scale: Delivering on the Promise of Higher Education* (Nov. 2018)
- Keynote, First-Year Engineering Experience National Conference. Columbus, OH: *Not Leaving Success Up to Chance: Moving from Best Practice to High Impact* (August 2016)
- Featured Speaker, Ohio State University Alumni Association Speakers Bureau (Spring 2014 – Summer 2017)
- Plenary Speaker, University Orientation, The Ohio State University (Summer 2011 – Summer 2017)
- Featured Speaker, Recruitment and Yield Events, The Ohio State University (Spring 2011 – Summer 2017)

SELECT PRESENTATIONS

44th Annual Conference on the First-Year Experience (New Orleans, LA)

- Featured Panel: *Career and Leadership Lessons from National Advisory Board Members*. February 2025

Times Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed Present: Student Success U.S. (Knoxville, TN)

- Invited Panelist: *Student Success from Day One: Fostering a Positive Student Culture*. October 2024

Oracle Research University Summit (Redwood Shores, CA)

- Featured Panel: *The Next Ten Years: Industry Disruption and the Student System*. April 2024

Times Higher Education and Inside Higher Ed Present: Student Success U.S. (Los Angeles, CA)

- Featured Panel: *Two Plus Two Isn't Four: Ensuring Transfer Student Success*. November 2023

American Association of Collegiate Registrars & Admissions Officers (AACRAO), 31st Annual Conference (Toronto, CA)

- *Listening, Collaborating, and Innovating for Student Success*. November 2021

Times Higher Education Presents: U.S. Student Success Forum (New York, NY)

- *What About Generation Z?* September 2019

EAB Summer Institute (Marco Island, FL)

- *Student Success is Everyone's Business: Harnessing the Power of the Campus Community*. July 2019

American Council on Education, 101st Annual Meeting (Philadelphia, PA)

- *Understanding Your University's Capacity to Improve Student Success*. March 2019

36th Annual Conference on the First Year Experience (Atlanta, GA)

- *Maximizing At-Risk Student Success through a Year-Round Peer Mentoring Model*. February 2017

University Innovation Alliance Convening – University of Central Florida (Orlando, FL)

- *Driving Collaborations for Student Success*. October 2016

The College Board Forum (Las Vegas, NV)

- *The Role of Off-Campus Orientation Programs in International Students' Success*. October 2014

National Orientation Director Association Conference (Las Vegas, NV)

- *Conversations for Seasoned Professionals: Keeping Up with Communication and Tech Innovation*. October 2012

SELECT MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

- Southern Standard (Op-Ed). *Knocking Down Barriers to Affordable Higher Education* (April 21, 2025)
- Insights for College Transitions, Vol. 20(1). *Engaging with Scholarship: Featuring Dr. Bernie Savarese*. The National Resource Center on the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition (September 2024)
- Life in Higher Ed Podcast, S2(E3). *Student Success; Everyone's Responsibility - Dr. Bernie Savarese* (Spring 2024)
- The Interview (USA) by Good Course: *Leaders and Change-Makers Share Their Stories - Dr. Bernie Savarese* (Nov 2023)
- ASCEND to Higher Retention Rates Podcast: Practical Strategies for Increasing Student Retention, Completion, and Student Success, S1(E40). *Expert Session: Featuring Dr. Bernie Savarese* (May 2023)
- The Ohio State University Alumni Magazine, *Good Fortune Paid Forward - Dr. Bernie Savarese* (Spring 2021)
- Times Higher Education, *Influencing International Student Success* – Featured Interview (Fall 2019)
- U.S. News and World Report, Best Colleges 2016 Guidebook, *Headed for Success* – Featured Interview (Fall 2016)
- NPR's The Sound of Ideas, *The College Sendoff and First-Year Retention* – Live Interview (August 2016)
- USA Today.com, *Heed These Tips for College Success* - Featured Interview (September 2015)
- USNews.com, *Colleges Take Aim at Improving Student Success* – Featured Interview (September 2015)
- NPR/WOSU's All Sides with Anne Fisher, *Surviving the First Year of College* – Live Interview (April 2015)
- The Ohio State University Alumni Association Magazine, *Success Starts Here* – Cover Story (January 2013)

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

