Dr. Bernie Savarese joined the University of Tennessee System in 2021 as the associate vice president for student success and currently serves as the acting vice president for academic affairs, research, and student success. In this role, he convenes and works closely with the chief academic, research, diversity, and student affairs officers of UT's 5 campuses. He also serves as the liaison to various state agencies and departments, and staffs the Education, Research and Service Committee of the Board of Trustees.

From 2017 to 2021, Dr. Savarese served as the Assistant Vice President for Student Success and the Student Experience at New York University (NYU). There, he oversaw the creation of the Division of Student Success, led the university's Student Success Steering Committee, and served as a subject matter expert to university leaders on the New York, Abu Dhabi, and Shanghai campuses. Prior to joining NYU, Dr. Savarese worked at the Ohio State University for almost two decades, most recently directing the campus' nationally recognized First Year Experience (FYE) program and serving on the leadership team in the Division of Enrollment Management. Before his time in FYE, he held various leadership roles across the Division of Student Affairs.

Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, Dr. Savarese grew up in the Appalachian region of eastern Ohio. He received a bachelor's degree in Political Science and an MBA from The Ohio State University, a master's degree in Higher Education Administration from Bowling Green State University, and his Doctor of Education in Leadership and Innovation from New York University. Dr. Savarese also serves on a number of boards including serving Chair for The Ohio State University Alumni Association Board of Directors and as a member of the national advisory board for the National Resource Center on the First Year Experience and Students in Transition out of the University of South Carolina.