

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT MARTIN ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Fall Meeting

The fall meeting of The University of Tennessee at Martin Advisory Board was held at 1:00 pm (CDT) on Friday, September 8, 2023, in the Boling University Center, Room 206AB, on the campus of The University of Tennessee at Martin.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

The meeting was open to the public and streamed via the campus website. A recording of the meeting will be posted on the Advisory Board website following the meeting. All votes were taken by roll call in compliance with the Advisory Board Bylaws.

Attendance:

Hal Bynum, Taylor Cantrell, Monice Hagler (via Zoom), Art Sparks (Chair), Clinton Smith, and Johnny Woolfolk. Others in attendance included UT Martin administrative and leadership staff.

A quorum was established. The meeting was called to order by Chair Sparks.

II. Opening Remarks

Chair Sparks recognized and introduced Dr. Yancy Freeman, the newly appointed 12th Chancellor for UT Martin. This included recognizing his wife, Rafielle Boone Freeman, who is a Nursing graduate from UTM. Chancellor Freeman's background includes enrollment management, and he has been visiting area high schools.

Chancellor Freeman shared that he is happy to be here. This has been a whirlwind experience with already over 200 meetings with various people across Northwest Tennessee.

Dr. Anderson Starling has assumed an administrative position, so the remainder of his faculty representative term on the Advisory Board will be completed by Dr. Clinton Smith, 202-2023 Faculty Senate President.

III. Approval of Minutes..... Tab 1

Motion #1: To approve the minutes (Bynum/Smith) of the Advisory Board meeting for the May 26, 2023, meeting as presented with no corrections or modification. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Recognition of Julia Wells (**Art Sparks**).....

Due to health reasons, Julia Wells decided to resign her position on the UTM Advisory Board. On behalf of the entire Advisory Board, Chair Sparks expressed his appreciation of the dedication, time, and effort she’s given to UTM, including her time on the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees. A replacement for Julia has not been named yet. There was a brief discussion about perhaps changing the way appointments are made to the Advisory Board.

V. Recognition of UT President’s Award Winners (**Art Sparks**)..... Tab 2

Chair Sparks asked each of the winners from UTM to stand and be recognized. Those winners are:

- *Embrace Diversity* – **Henrietta Giles**, Lecturer, Department of Mass Media and Strategic Communications
- *Optimistic and Visionary* – **Destin Tucker**, Director, Undergraduate Admissions
- *Excel in All We Do* – **Stephanie Kolitsch**, Director of Accreditation, SACS Liaison
- *United and Connected* – **Clinton Smith**, Professor and Chair, Department of Educational Studies

VI. Introduction of Director of Public Safety – Michael O’Neill, and Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts – Dr. Jeffrey Bibbee (**Yancy Freeman**).....

Chancellor Freeman introduced two new hires for UTM, Michael O’Neill, the Director of Public Safety, and Dr. Jeffrey Bibbee, the Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts.

Michael O’Neill serves as the Director of Public Safety. Michael came to UTM from Minnesota where he worked with the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Office for over 28 years. He is also a Command Sergeant Major in the Army Reserve, which is why he is not with us today. He is currently in Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri for an Army conference.

Jeffrey Bibbee serves as the Dean of the College of Humanities and Fine Arts. Jeffrey comes to UTM from the University of North Alabama where he served as a department chair and associate dean in the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering, and University Historian. Jeffrey’s academic appointment is in the Department of History and Philosophy where he specializes in the history of modern Britain and history education.

VII. Welcome Weekend and Start of Semester Activities (**Andy Lewter**) Tab 3

Dr. Andy Lewter, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, expressed his excitement about the start of the school year. UTM appears to be back to pre-COVID engagement levels from our students. A few highlights from his presentation:

- Housing is at 89% occupancy, which is a “comfortable full” for UTM. That includes 795 first-time residents.
- Welcome Weekend ran from Thursday, August 17, through Sunday, August 22. Some of the events included Convocation, City of Martin fair, student org fair, Silent Disco, Yard Show, and the Welcome Home Picnic. The Welcome Home Picnic was a first-time event and was a big success where over 1000 people were served.
- There are many resources to help students with the transition into college. UTM is putting a focus on prevention / positive health in an attempt to prevent mental health struggles.

Chair Sparks asked about the future of the Y dorms (Ellington and Browning). Discussions are underway to replace Browning Hall, including a financial plan. The current plan is to keep Ellington because it is in better shape. There is a long-term housing plan, including pricing for students with an eye toward being careful not to outprice our students. The Y dorms do not have any debt service.

Johnny Woolfolk asked about the recruitment numbers for fraternities and sororities. He sees a national trend as there seems to be less interest in them. UTM does promote fraternity and sorority recruitment. In the Fall of 2023, the average CPC sorority chapter size is 90, and 100 bids were awarded. IFC fraternities average 52 members, and 73 bids were awarded. NPHC organizations typically recruit in the Spring semester.

Chancellor Freeman echoed that student mental health is a crisis. Students here are concerned about the available services at UTM, and Chancellor Freeman shared this is a priority for him.

VIII. Enrollment and Retention Update for Regional Centers and Martin Campus (**Phil Cavalier**).

Provost Cavalier reported that this week is the 14th day census, which means that our enrollment numbers will soon be finalized. The numbers below represent where we expect to be.

- First time freshmen: Fall 2023 = 1,118. That represents 11+ from Fall 2022 (1,107).
- There are 707 graduate students, which is now 4 years of 700+ graduate students.
- Overall enrollment headcount is 6,950. That represents 75+ from Fall 2022 (6,875).

- Full-Time Equivalent (FTE), which drives revenue 35+ from Fall 2022.
- Retention is at 73.5%, which is a 2.5% increase from Fall 2022.
 - Student Success Center initiated a Reenrollment Campaign. The campaign started with 862 eligible but unregistered students, and by the end of the campaign, 336 (40%) of those students had registered.
- Like many other universities, Covid hurt our enrollment, but we have increased every year since. It appears that drop in enrollment was indeed a Covid blip.
- UTM has its highest 6-year graduation rate ever at 54.8%. Previously 53.3% had been the highest 6-year graduation rate. This is a campus-wide effort.
- There are fewer incoming Transfer students this year. Community college enrollments are also down across the state. Jackson State Community College has a new president (Carol Rothstein), and we are hopeful this new relationship will help maximize the UTM Jackson Center.

Chair Sparks asked about UTM's relationship with Dyersburg State Community College and its new president. Provost Cavalier said the relationship is good, and there have already been many collaborative conversations, specifically around the Test Hub. There are also ongoing conversations with Southwest Tennessee Community College since they are offering courses on the UTM Somerville Center campus.

Chair Sparks asked how UTM compares to its peers in enrollment growth and retention growth. Low-mid 70% retention is where schools like UTM often land. How do we get to 80% and become exceptional? Chancellor Freeman said we do well against comparable peers in enrollment and retention, and in graduation rates. UTM is competitive with aspirational peers, but there is more work to be done on graduation rates and diversity enrollment.

Monice Hagler asked what factors led to increased graduation rates? Was counseling a big part of it? Provost Cavalier reported that first-year advising was an important piece because that helped remove barriers. Provost Cavalier will work with Rion McDonald of Institutional Research to see if there are patterns that emerged.

IX. Blue Oval City Update (**Phil Cavalier**)

The UTM Somerville Center hosted a workshop for local teachers about what will happen at Blue Oval City. This was to help the teachers be better informed so they can explain to students and families about what will be expected at Blue Oval City. This workshop will evolve into a 5-session series on various topics, including things such as mechatronics. There are questions now about scaling this idea up, financial backing, possible renovations to the UTM Somerville Center, and how Ford and its auxiliaries best utilize the UTM Somerville Center and its resources.

X. College of Business & Global Affairs Update (Charley Deal) Tab 4

College of Business & Global Affairs (CBGA) funded a study about what a new CBGA building would look like while keeping the same footprint in the Quad. Vice Chancellor Deal shared photo renderings that depicted open floor plan, pedestrian friendly accesses, and pushing the building toward Lovelace Street to provide more campus space in front of the building. If approved in July of 2024 (currently #4 on UT capital projects list), construction will start in late 2025, and classes starting in the new building in 2028. Estimated cost is \$56.5 million, and the matching funds (\$3.21 million) has already been raised. Chair Sparks asked if only CBGA would be housed there or if other units would join. Vice Chancellor Deal said only the CBGA would be housed in the building.

XI. Fiscal Year 2023 Recap (**Petra McPhearson**)..... Tab 5

- Fiscal Year ends June 30 each year. Revenue sources include tuition and fees, state appropriations, grants and contracts, sales and services, auxiliary sources, and other. Tuition and fees comprise ~51% and state appropriations ~35% of UTM’s revenue, respectively. Those are the two largest sources of revenue.
- The revenue for FY 23 was ~\$480K above prediction largely due to increases in grants and contracts, sales and services, and auxiliary operations. There was a decline in tuition and fee revenue due to the full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment not growing at the planned rate.
Sources of tuition and fees:
 - Martin campus – 60%, Online – 29%, Dual Enrollment – 6%, Regional Centers – 5%.
- The expenditures for FY 23 were below budgeted expectations, largely because instructional costs were lower.
 - Instructional costs are the largest expenditure at 39%, followed by student services at 14% and scholarships at 12%.

- Vice Chancellor McPhearson shared that FY 23 was a good year and looks forward to a good 2024.

Johnny Woolfolk commended Vice Chancellor McPhearson for a good job managing the budget, specifically on ending as close to allocations as she did.

Hal Bynum asked how to UTM salaries compare to our peers – do we pay as well as our peers? Vice Chancellor McPhearson responded that UTM is in the lower end of area market ranges. We did just increase the minimum hourly wage to \$13 and we are aiming for \$15/hour soon. Being in the lower end of area market ranges leads to some vacancies, namely the grounds crew.

XII. Capital Projects Update (**Petra McPhearson**)..... Tab 6

There are 21 projects that are either completed, in construction, or in design. Those projects total \$129 million.

Completed projects: University Center ADA restroom Update, University Center Sodexo Freshens Update, Elam Center Lighting Upgrades, and Latimer-Smith Engineering & Science Building.

Projects in construction: Elam Center Mall Glass Project (to complete in early 2024), Blaylock Inspiration Oracle (to complete in September 2023 and dedicate at Homecoming in October), Indoor Batting Facility (to complete in late 2023), ROTC East Wall Brick Repairs (to complete in Fall 2023).

Projects in design: Hall Moody Systems Upgrade (all occupants now spread across campus), Grove Apartment Demolition will be bid next week to be completed by early 2024, EPS Systems Upgrade, TEST Hub (pursuing federal funds to help) is in partnership with several schools, University Center sewer line improvements (summer 2024), Clement Systems Upgrade phase 2 (4th floor and East Side) and will remain dedicated for student services, Athletics Facilities Improvements, Security Improvements (hardware for classrooms and offices), Brehm Envelope Upgrade, Elam Center Improvements (men’s locker rooms and scoreboards), ADA campus upgrades, Elam Center Exterior Walls, South Chiller Plant Chiller Replacement.

Anderson Starling asked what the biggest hurdle will be for the CBGA building. Vice Chancellor McPhearson shared that there are competing priorities with the State and UT System. We are currently 4th on the UT capital projects list. Chancellor Freeman is already having conversations about moving this up the list.

XIII. Comments by the Chancellor

- Capital projects are critically important. They are needed to help grow enrollment, provide a quality teaching environment, etc. Campus improvement means we care about what happens around here.
- Salary and compensation will continue to be a priority. UTM needs to provide a livable wage for its employees and be competitive in the market. The goal is to increase the hourly wage to \$15.
- There is a special called UT Board of Trustees meeting today. The Education, Research and Service Committee (ERS) approved new admissions requirements for all UT schools.
 - The approved proposal means all UT undergraduate campuses would guarantee first-year admission to all Tennessee high school students who meet any of the following eligibility criteria:
 - Finish in the top 10% of their high school's graduating class; or
 - Achieve a 4.0 or higher cumulative GPA.
 - Additionally, UT campuses in Martin, Pulaski, and Chattanooga would add a third criteria:
 - Achieve a 3.2 or cumulative higher GPA **and** have an ACT composite score of 23 or higher (or an SAT score of 1130-1150 or higher).
- There are two upcoming town halls (9/14 and 10/2) that will address Access and Engagement. UTM must be a place that is welcoming for all. What does access mean for UTM? UTM will provide resources for success. Chancellor Freeman is excited and happy about these conversations and will report back to the Advisory Board.

XIV. Closing Remarks by Chair

- Chair Sparks encouraged Chancellor Freeman not to be anyone but himself. Call on us (the Advisory Board) to serve as support structure and promote UTM. The Advisory Board is here for the students. Personal relationships will bring students to UTM.
- The next meeting of the Advisory Board will be the annual Winter Meeting scheduled for January 26, 2024, held in-person.
- Art Sparks' time as chair runs through June 2024, and he rolls off in June 2025. He expects a new Chair to be elected at the next meeting.

XV. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn (Woolfolk/Bynum). The motion carried unanimously.