

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT MARTIN ADVISORY BOARD

The winter meeting of The University of Tennessee at Martin Advisory Board was held at 1:00 pm (CDT) on Friday, January 26, 2024, 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 (*Art Sparks and Yancy Freeman*)

Chair Sparks recognized Dan Strasser, incoming Advisory Board member, who joined the meeting via Zoom. His appointment is not official yet so cannot vote, but he is participating in today's meeting. Chair Sparks encouraged all in attendance to speak up and ask questions.

Chancellor Freeman thanked the Advisory Board members for their hard work, and participation. Specifically, he thanked Johnny Woolfolk for attending the Future Skyhawks Reception in Jackson last night. He also thanked the campus for their cooperation during the cold weather and storms last week when UTM closed. He also specifically thanked the Facilities staff for all of their hard work during the cold weather and storms last week. He stated that he is looking forward to this meeting because the agenda is full.

III. Approval of Minutes

Motion #1: To approve the minutes (Smith/Bynum) of the Advisory Board meeting for the September 8, 2023, meeting as presented with no corrections or modification. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Recognition of UTAA Outstanding Teacher Awards – Dr. Jason Roberts and Dr. Janet Wilbert
(Yancy Freeman)

Before reading their brief bios, Chancellor Freeman stated that Dr. Roberts and Dr. Wilbert define the ethic of care that so many of our faculty demonstrate. They were asked to stand as their bios were read.

These awards are given to faculty members on all UT campuses who have been selected by their colleagues and students as the outstanding teachers in a given year.

Dr. Jason Roberts, a veterinarian, is the director of the University of Tennessee at Martin Veterinary Technology Program and Professor in the Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Geosciences. He is the founding Director of the Veterinary Technology program and helped establish a new degree program in veterinary science and technology at UT Martin. He also teaches, advises, and coordinates the pre-veterinary medicine program. Dr. Roberts has earned multiple teaching and advising awards including the 2013 UT Martin outstanding advisor award, the 2015 Coffee outstanding teacher award, and the 2017 University of Tennessee President's Award for outstanding educator.

Dr. Janet Wilbert is an Associate Professor in the department of Health and Human Performance since her hire in August of 2000. She has been instrumental in teaching and working with many pre-professional students who have gone on to become great athletic trainers, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and many other health care professionals. She was recognized with the Outstanding Advisor Award in 2008. She loves teaching and especially enjoys it when her students connect theory and practice. Dr. Wilbert was inducted to the Tennessee Athletic Trainers' Society Hall of Fame in January 2013.

V. Employee Engagement Survey Results *(Michael Washington and Petra McPhearson)*

Petra McPhearson, Senior Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration began the presentation by introducing the survey. The UT System engages McLean & Co for this annual employee survey for UTM staff. Michael Washington, Director of Human Resources, then highlighted some key points of the survey. Gwendolyn Hopkins, Administrative Specialist, and Kenneth Jackson, student worker, both from Human Resources assisted him. The following are a few brief highlights; the entire presentation is in the Board materials.

- This survey was administered in the Fall of 2023. The survey was grouped into organizational drivers, job drivers, and individual drivers. UTM scored well on the recognition driver and the career advancement, development drivers, and the employee empowerment driver.
- There was a high survey participation rate (49%).
- The overall Employee Experience Monitor (EXM) score was 42.2 but the scale ranges from -100 to 100. So, this represents a good score.
- UTM is performing well in many categories but there is still room for improvement. Strategies for improvement will be campus-wide and not only for those departments identified with lower scores.
- There is a trend of white respondents scoring higher than black, and men scoring higher than women.
- Compensation usually scores lower in this type of survey, so that was not surprising. UTM will address this by focusing on the lowest paid staff, trying to get the minimum rate up to \$15/hour. A compensation panel is reviewing additional strategies for staff compensation.
- Among the strategies that emerged from the survey is a succession planning model with 5 pillars (mentoring, leadership, storytelling, job shadowing, stretch assignments, and career action planning), and an onboarding checklist.

Chair Sparks asked how often the survey is conducted and if it would be worth conducting the survey more frequently, especially focusing on those areas that are low performing. Michael Washington replied that an annual survey would be fine if the intervention strategies are implemented. Petra McPhearson stressed that this is a UT System survey, and we have the opportunity to do follow-up pulse surveys. Chair Sparks further stressed the probable effectiveness of the pulse surveys b/c “only expect if you follow with inspect.” Chancellor Freeman appreciated the feedback and is happy with how UTM compares to the other UT schools. The Cabinet is familiar with this report, and Chancellor Freeman will continue to focus on this survey’s results through conversations with the Cabinet and their areas.

Chair Sparks asked how we compare to the other UT schools. Chancellor Freeman stressed that UTM employees like working here and how their work contributes to the whole of the institution, and the scores reflect that. Opportunity areas include better engaging non-exempt staff, increasing scores from women and younger employees. Chancellor Freeman would rather be at UTM than others based on the scores that he has seen.

VI. Capital Projects update on College of Business & Global Affairs (*Jeanna Curtis-Swafford and Petra McPhearson*)

Jeanna Curtis-Swafford gave history and background of the current College of Business & Global Affairs building. It was built in 1951 as a dormitory and was converted to classrooms in 1975. A new building is a priority with financial and moral support from many. A donor has committed \$4M already.

Petra McPhearson shared that the UT System can submit three capital outlay projects each year, and this project did not make the top three this year. Still waiting on the Governor's budget to see if those three still stand, and the results may affect the three projects for next year. There are many state budget issues at play. If things go as we want and this gets approved in 2025, the anticipated opening for a new building will be Fall 2029.

Johnny Woolfolk asked about the proposed building site. Petra McPhearson said it would be built in the same footprint as the current building.

VII. Title III Grant – Center for Teaching and Learning (*Anderson Starling*); Learning Commons (*Erik Nordberg*)

Anderson Starling began the presentation and said UTM was notified in September 2023 that we were awarded the grant. He then shared the three committees that are required by the Department of Education: Steering, Management, and Evaluation. There are two main goals for this grant (1) Create a Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and (2) Create a Learning Commons. The goals of the grant also align well with 2 of the 4 QEP goals, and the DoE funding will help move these goals toward completion. He then discussed the goal progress and budget adjustments, including prioritizing the hiring of the CTL Director, which will be a national search.

Erik Nordberg discussed the Learning Commons by talking about physical space currently available in the library and future space with remodeling in the Library. This will increase capacity for many things including peer tutoring and distance learning.

Clinton Smith asked what role the CTL would play in faculty orientation.

Chancellor Freeman thanked the people who have been working on this, and is excited about what this could mean for UTM.

VIII. Athletics Update (*Ashley Bynum*)

Ashley Bynum shared information on academic highlights, NCAA updates, and the transfer portal. Academic Highlights: The Office of Intercollegiate of Athletics has staff, priorities, and policies around academic support. The four-year trend of UTM athletes having higher GPAs than the UTM

student body and the NCAA average demonstrates the success of our initiatives. The overall GPA goal is 3.2 and they've been above that since 2019.

NCAA Updates: There are still some unknowns surrounding NIL (Name, Image, Likeness) and these unknowns can complicate things, such as the role/reach of the coaches. It is difficult for schools like UTM to compete with Power 5 schools. The 4-year transfer scholarship requirements raise the stakes for taking in undergraduate transfer athletes. The slides detailed these requirements. Nationally, the number of athletes going into the transfer portal has more than doubled since 2018-19. The UTM numbers have also doubled in that same time frame (32 to 63). UTM has continued to bring in transfer students from 4-year and 2-year schools, with 4-year transfer outpacing the 2-year since 2020-21.

Chair Sparks asked how our number of athletes compares to previous years. Kurt McGuffin, Director of Athletics, said UTM had 370 athletes in 2017, and we now have 430-480. Most of these athletes do not have full scholarships but are on partial scholarship. Since 2017 when more walk-on and partial scholarship athletes were added, the revenue to UTM has increased by \$2.4M.

Chair Sparks asked if we lose transfer based on academics. Ashley said we don't lose many freshmen because of academics, but transfers can be a little more difficult. The transfer coursework coming in can be challenging and can be a multi-semester process. Chair Sparks followed up about whether students changing their major is a problem. Ashley responded that we are sometimes unable to start a student in the program they really want to be in, so they often start in BIS, which can sometimes lengthen a student's time to graduation. Chair Sparks pointed out that this issue cannot just be a student athlete problem, to which Ashley agreed. Ashley pointed out the importance of having staff dedicated to advocating for the student athletes. Students who are not athletes and do not have these advocates may struggle. Chair Sparks thanked Ashley for her comments and helping him understand that athletes have an advocate when students who are not athletes may not.

Chancellor Freeman shared there was a transfer initiative from the UT System a few years back. He was part of that work and during that process that working group learned just how difficult it was for students to transfer within the state. The focus was on students transferring between UT schools. Departments were to have conversations about seamless transfer. The upcoming implementation of DASH will force us to re-evaluate course equivalencies. There will always be work to do. The last conversations of that working group were in 2020. He said he would follow up on this issue with Chair Sparks.

Chair Sparks pointed out that if a student transfers out of UTM it hurts our numbers. He then asked if a student transfers in, does that help graduation rates? Ashley replied that we don't get credit for that. But NCAA has a report to account for things like that. The Ohio Valley Conference office and NCAA helps to keep things sorted.

IX. Retention update and anticipated Fall 2024 numbers (*Brad Baumgardner and Destin Tucker*)

Destin Tucker highlighted the Fall 2024 enrollment goals. Currently, Fall 2024 transfer applications are trending up, and we believe it is tied to scholarship increases for the 24-25 recruiting cycle. Recent declines in transfer student enrollment are due in-part to low enrollments of our community college feeders.

The measures used to track and predict numbers include the number of accepted students, intent to enroll survey (78% accurate), and housing deposits. Each of these indicators is higher over a three-year average.

UTM increased merit scholarships starting Fall 24. One reason this is important is because our top-level scholarships had not moved in a long time. We were not competitive with our peers, and we are getting closer now with this increase.

The changes in the FAFSA are making us nervous. The FAFSA opened three months later, which has delayed other processes such as financial aid packaging. Students are committing to us but don't yet know how much it will cost. These conversations with families are delayed because of this.

The strategic enrollment plan is still working and will help move us toward our goal of 7,105 students.

Brad Baumgardner shared that our retention numbers are good and we are showing persistent growth. Students who meet the guaranteed admissions standards are performing well. He thanked the Bursar's Office, Academic Records, and the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarships for partnering with the Student Success Center to help re-enroll students after the drop for non-payment. We are well-positioned to have an increased retention rate again next year.

Chair Sparks asked about enrollment challenges where the Advisory Board can help. Destin shared there are transfer initiatives across the state to help transferability (such as aligning course numbers). The UT schools are trying to work together. Brad said what can sometimes be a challenge is to identify institutional performance gaps to see where we can better support students. He's glad this is part of the strategic plan.

Johnny Woolfolk added that he attended the Future Skyhawk Reception in Jackson last night and gave kudos to all the UTM folks who were there. He was very impressed and said it was a learning

experience for him. Chair Sparks asked Destin to let the Advisory Board know about the other receptions so they can attend.

X. Revision and Approval of Meeting Schedule 2024-2025 (*Art Sparks*)

Chair Sparks said the intention of amending the meeting schedule was to avoid having an Advisory Board meeting the Friday of Memorial Day Weekend.

Motion #2: To approve the proposed amended meeting schedule (Hal/Cantrell) of the Advisory Board. The motion carried unanimously.

XI. Comments by the Chancellor

Summing up Chancellor Freeman's first 100 days (about 160 days now):

- The "Flight with Freeman" tours gave him a chance to meet with previous chancellors. UTM Chancellor Emeritus, Margaret Perry, shared with him that this job is a lifestyle and not a job, and he has already learned this. He has had over 500 meetings since being here and numerous visits. He gave special thanks to Advancement and Undergraduate Admissions for organizing and helping with the visits, including his high school, Central High School, in Memphis.
- UTM did receive its reaffirmation of its SACSCOC accreditation. It went so well and passed with such flying colors that SACS commended UTM. This required such hard work to pull this together so it deserves a celebration, which will be coming soon!
- UTM has a new partnership with the Volunteer State Community College location in Springfield, TN. There were over 100 people there for the kickoff celebration and ribbon cutting on November 29.
- Capital Projects: The Grove Apartments are now gone, and UTM will soon be selling some bricks as a fundraising effort. The Hall Moody Administration Building is still under construction. As highlighted earlier in this meeting, the forthcoming College of Business & Global Affairs Building is a high priority for him and he will keep it in front of the UT System.
- Access and Engagement is a new division focusing on student success for all students. It will focus on success programming and federal grants like TRIO.
- During Homecoming UTM renamed UVI and UVII residence halls to Arnold Pryor Place and Conner Community, respectively.
- UTM Skyhawk football team is now a three-time consecutive OVC football champion. Congratulations to the team and Coach Jason Simpson.

- We just finished the refresh of our current strategic plan, which runs through 2025. We will soon begin working on a new strategic plan that will take us to 2030. We will focus on questions such as, What is coming? What do we need to work on? How do we engage the entire campus?

XII. Closing remarks by the Chair

- Chair Sparks congratulated Advisory Board member, Hal Bynum for recently graduating from UTM with his Bachelor's degree.
- UTM is creating a new Chief of Staff position. The search is currently open and moving forward. An announcement of this hire should come soon.
- UTM will soon begin the search for the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement, which was vacated when Charley Deal accepted a new position with the UT Institute of Agriculture. A committee will be formed soon to start this process.
- Chair Sparks thanked Chancellor Freeman, the UTM staff, and the Advisory Board for their hard work on behalf of UTM.

XIII. Adjournment

Motion #3: To adjourn (Woolfolk/Bynum). The motion carried unanimously.