



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE  
CAMPUS ADVISORY BOARD  
MINUTES  
February 11, 2022  
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Advisory Board met virtually at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 11, 2022.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair John Tickle called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Roll call of board members conducted with the following present:

Mr. John Tickle, Chair, Mr. Allen Carter, Mr. Beauvais Lyons, Ms. Alexia Poe, Mr. Tom Smith, Ms. Alexandra Szmuto, Ms. Syreeta Vaughn

**III. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

Mr. Tom Smith made a motion to approve the October 15, 2021, minutes provided the Secretary is authorized to make any necessary edits to correct spelling, grammatical, or format errors or other technical errors subsequently identified. Mr. Allen Carter seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**IV. CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE**  
**Dr. Donde Plowman, Chancellor**

Chancellor Plowman greeted everyone and thanked the advisory board members for agreeing to change the format of the meeting for today. The plan is to return to an in-person meeting in May.

Chancellor Plowman welcomed and introduced Dr. Linda Martin, Interim Sr. Vice Chancellor/Sr. Vice President of UTIA to the group. Dr. Martin also serves as the Vice President of Academic Affairs for the UT System. Dr. Martin began her interim role last fall when Dr. Tim Cross retired. Dr. Martin will continue to fill the interim role until a new Sr. Vice Chancellor/Sr. Vice President is named and in place.

Chancellor Plowman asked Dr. Martin to provide an update on some of the things that have occurred at UTIA while she has been leading the UTIA team. Dr. Martin reminded the group of the reunification process UTK and UTIA began prior to the pandemic. Dr. Martin shared how the reunification provided a way to leverage resources in research and faculty that did



not exist previously. Dr. Martin provided a few examples of the positive things happening within UTIA. Thirty-two new extension agents have been hired across the state. The AgResearch and Education Centers received a one-time \$50 million grant to improve research infrastructure. Several building projects are underway. A new master plan is being developed for the UT, Knoxville campus, which includes UTIA. The leadership team is exploring an opportunity to expand the department of forestry, wildlife, and fisheries to a school of natural resources.

Chancellor Plowman requested Mr. Beauvais Lyons reach out to the faculty senate to initiate a review the faculty handbook for potential revisions that would reflect the reunified campus structure. Mr. Lyons informed the group a comprehensive editorial review is underway to identify needed revisions and move those revisions through the proper process.

Mr. Lyons asked Dr. Martin about the opportunity to build relationships between our academic units and our extension agents. Dr. Martin reported Dr. Ashley Stokes, Dean of Extension, is interested in developing the new relationships and is working to connect several units with extension. Mr. Lyons asked if there might be a pool of resources established to help facilitate those relationships. Dr. Martin shared the extension offices are well respected and trusted in the communities they serve. The connections are valuable tools when academic units look to reach out in the community to provide service or conduct research.

Mr. Smith asked if the Ellington Agricultural Center in Nashville belongs to UT. Chancellor Plowman confirmed the building does belong to UT. Mr. Smith commented on the central location in the Nashville area and the untapped potential for UT events to increase the awareness of UT in the heart of Nashville. Dr. Martin will ask Dean Stokes to follow up with Mr. Smith on his comments related to the use of the Ellington Agricultural Center. Chancellor Plowman shared information on the c-suite advisory board she has created to reach out to industry leaders in the Nashville area to learn about their needs and look for ways to assist them.

Chancellor Plowman announced Ms. Syreeta Vaughn's appointment will end this spring. The Gov. Lee has submitted a nomination for a replacement, and we are awaiting action by the state legislature. Chancellor Plowman stated we will honor Ms. Vaughn's service at the May meeting.

Chancellor Plowman reminded the group of their responsibility for action items involving the budget and the strategic plan. Since there were no action items for today's meeting, Chancellor Plowman provided the group with a campus update.

Chancellor Plowman stated Gov. Lee's support of higher education is evident in his proposed budget that includes \$210 million of new funding for our campus. Chancellor Plowman applauded the 4% salary pool for raises. These funds, if approved, will cover an increase for 90-95% of our employees. The campus will receive an additional \$20 million through the outcomes-based funding formula, which will allow us to increase the number of new faculty



hires. President Boyd originally requested funding for the UT-Oak Ridge Innovation Institute to be funded annually over several years. The proposed budget includes \$72 million to fully fund the Institute this year. This will allow for the hiring of additional research faculty to work alongside our tenure track faculty to advance our research efforts on campus. Proposed funds of \$83 million will be used for the new Haslam College of Business building. Funding for the new Institute for American Civics, covered under separate legislation, is included in the proposed budget. The new Institute will become a model in viewpoint diversity and how to interact respectfully to move forward from the toxicity that exists today. Our College of Veterinary Medicine is not covered under the outcomes-based formula. Securing the recurring \$2 million will greatly benefit the College. Chancellor Plowman reminded the group of how important the \$17 million for deferred maintenance is to the university.

Mr. Smith shared Gov. Haslam began the process of addressing deferred maintenance across the state. Mr. Smith expressed his appreciation to see Gov. Lee continue to recognize the needs and provide the much-needed funds.

Chancellor Plowman shared enrollment growth continues and we anticipate continued growth in 2022-2023. We will not be able to admit all the qualified students that apply for the 2022-2023. We are meeting our enrollment goals earlier than planned, which puts a stress on our ability to meet the housing needs of our students. We are moving forward on the process required to build new dorms and looking at partnerships with private investors.

Ms. Alexia Poe commented on the nationwide trends of decreasing college attendance and questioned why our campus is different. Chancellor Plowman shared the college attendance rate has already decreased in the state of Tennessee. Our campus invested in strategic enrollment planning four to five years ago. Each year we look at offering more appealing financial packages. We have fourteen out of state recruiters and we are beginning to see their work pay off in increased out of state applications. A significant amount of our enrollment growth is coming from out of state.

Our retention rates are improving. The fall to spring retention rate for first-year students is up almost a full percentage point from last year to 96.1%. Fewer than 8% of our first-year students are on academic probation, which is the lowest in our history.

Ms. Vaughn commented on how amazing, and resilient our students are to have survived the difficulties they experienced over the past two years. Ms. Vaughn expressed how proud she is of the students and the work they are doing.

Chancellor Plowman referred to the presentation by Dr. Amber Williams at the October 2021 meeting related to the initiatives the Department of Student Success put in place. Targeted work to assist students is making a difference.

Chancellor Plowman shared several prestigious research accomplishments by our faculty. The awards are just one indicator of the quality and status of our faculty. Chancellor



Plowman expressed her pride in our faculty and looks forward to seeing additional recognitions for the amazing work being done by our faculty members. Chancellor Plowman pointed out UT is ranked second among our peer and aspirant universities in research expenditures per faculty principal investigator. We are looking for ways to increase the number of faculty members serving as principal investigators.

Mr. Lyons shared he serves on the College of Arts and Sciences promotion and tenure committee. Through his service on the committee, he has been impressed with the quality of the faculty hires. The level of their engagement, scholarship, research, and professional service, is inspirational. The younger faculty are coming in with such high standards and they are meeting those standards.

Chancellor Plowman announced the launch of the new Institute of Advanced Materials and Manufacturing, which includes 150 faculty members. The group currently represents \$60 million in research expenditures. Dr. Deborah Crawford, Vice Chancellor for Research, will join us at our next meeting and will share more information about what is happening in research.

Chancellor Plowman spoke to the strategic goal which focuses on ensuring a culture where Vol is a Verb. A piece of the goal relates to differing viewpoints. Chancellor Plowman shared information on three speakers that have or will visit the campus during this academic year, Mr. Van Jones, Dr. Jonathan Haidt, and Dr. Donna Hicks. A week later this spring will be dedicated to education and discussion related to how to navigate a world of diverse points of view while remaining respectful.

Chancellor Plowman shared Forbes recently name UT, Knoxville as one of the top 500 large employers in the country. When we analyzed the report, we discovered we are 1<sup>st</sup> in the SEC, 9<sup>th</sup> among national public universities, 15<sup>th</sup> among public and private universities, and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the state of Tennessee for large employers. On January 1, the minimum rate was raised, and additional salary adjustments were made for more than 3,950 employees. The minimum salary for full-time tenure track faculty was increased. We were able to share a 4% salary pool last year with our employees and if the proposed budget is approved, we will be able to do so again this year.

Chancellor Plowman provided details related to our new customer relationship management system (CRM). We currently do not have a single system that tracks how we interact with our students to alum to donor. The new system will allow us to modernize the student experience and will transform how our student support staff do their work.

Chancellor Plowman reported there are two finalists scheduled to interview later this month for the Sr. Vice Chancellor/Sr. Vice President of UTIA position. The position reports to the chancellor for operational issues and the president where state-wide agriculture industry needs are concerned.



Dr. Martin shared information on the new partnership UTIA has with Aramark. The partnership allows for one of the AgResearch Centers to provide all of the beef served in our dining halls. She also shared the UT Creamery is preparing to open this spring in the Visitors Center thanks to gifts from two alums. Charles and Julie Wharton will be honored with the naming of the large animal hospital in May. The Wharton's have supported the campus in numerous ways over the years and their donation will allow us to continue to attract top students and faculty. Chancellor Plowman expressed her appreciation to Dr. Martin for the work she has completed while in her interim role.

Chancellor Plowman spoke to the excitement surrounding athletics. Athletics recorded its highest graduation rate and they produced three All Americans last fall. Brian Pensky was named SEC Coach of the Year and the soccer team won the SEC championship. Dr. Chris Klenck was named the SEC Team Physician of the Year. Josh Heupel was the most successful first year coach in the Power 5 and the first ever two-time recipient of the Steve Spurrier First Year Coach award. UT was the only program to advance to the college world series, the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments, and a football bowl game.

Ms. Poe commented on how success in sports has brought a new feeling of excitement for the fans and the impressive news related to research.

Mr. Tickle asked Chancellor Plowman to provide an update on the NIL program.

Chancellor Plowman provided an overview of the name, image, likeness program that allows student athletes to make money off their image. The NCAA did not put any rules in place around how the NIL program would work. In the absence of any central rule every state is allowed to have different rules. We continue to wait to see if the federal government will establish a set of rules for everyone to follow.

Mr. Lyons asked about providing student athletes with tools to navigate the process. Chancellor Plowman responded the students have access to classes to assist them with how to develop their brand. The university is not allowed to assist them with navigating NIL.

Chancellor Plowman invited Dr. John Zomchick, Provost and Sr. Vice Chancellor to share his thoughts on the state of the university.

Dr. Zomchick expressed his excitement about the persistence in the retention numbers and the great work being done in student success. Dr. Zomchick reported students are showing up and doing fantastic work and the faculty are back in the classroom. Dr. Zomchick stated one of the reasons the university is running counter to the national decline in enrollment is due to the way the chancellor brought everyone back to the classroom to have a face-to-face experience. Dr. Zomchick reported the number of applications for the next class is up. He expressed how proud he is of the faculty and their accomplishments over the past year.



Provost Zomchick shared the search for the new dean of the College of Law produced five outstanding candidates. Professor Lonnie Brown was chosen as the new dean. Professor Brown is a well-rounded accomplished faculty member and lawyer. Chancellor Plowman shared she has received several congratulatory comments on the hire.

Mr. Carter commented on the men's tennis and golf teams' success this season. He expressed his interest in how NIL proceeds, the partnership with Aramark, and the opening of the creamery.

Ms. Szmuto expressed her excitement regarding the proposed budget and the opportunity for the hiring of additional faculty.

Mr. Lyons congratulated Ms. Vaughn on her service to the advisory board and shared his term as the faculty representative will end in May. Ms. Szmuto also indicated her term as the student representative will end in May as well. Chancellor Plowman assured everyone their service would be celebrated at the May meeting.

#### **V. CLOSING REMARKS**

Chancellor Plowman thanked the advisory board members for their attendance.

#### **VI. ADJOURN**

With no further business to come before the advisory board, the chair adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Susan E. England, Secretary