



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
CAMPUS ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
August 26, 2020
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Advisory Board met at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, August 26, 2020, virtually.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair John Tickle called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Roll call of board members conducted.

Members present: Mr. John Tickle, Chair, Mr. Beauvais Lyons, Ms. Alexia Poe, Mr. Tom Smith, Ms. Syreeta Vaughn, Ms. Karmen Jones joined at 12:30 p.m.

III. OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

Chancellor Donde Plowman introduced Dr. John Zomchick, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor, to the group. John began his tenure as Provost in June. Provost Zomchick shared his journey through the ranks of leadership at the University of Tennessee and expressed his desire to assist the Chancellor and the University take on the challenges ahead. Chancellor Plowman shared her appreciation of having Provost Zomchick as a member of her leadership team.

Chancellor Plowman introduced the faculty representative for this academic year, Beauvais Lyons. Beauvais is an esteemed faculty member, is recognized nationally and internationally in his field, and leads our outstanding printmaking program. Beauvais shared his journey of service while here at the University of Tennessee. Chancellor Plowman expressed her appreciation for his service.

John Tickle stated Chancellor Plowman will provide the group with an update on the happenings on campus since the last meeting. He asked everyone to hold their questions until the end of the Chancellor's presentation.

IV. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Tom Smith made a motion to approve the May 13, 2020 minutes provided the Secretary is authorized to make any necessary edits to correct spelling, grammatical, or format errors or other



technical errors subsequently identified. Alexia Poe seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

V. CHANCELLOR'S UPDATE

Donde Plowman, Chancellor

Chancellor Plowman reminded the group of the three principles the leadership team uses to work through all the issues associated with the pandemic.

- Keep our community healthy and hopeful.
- Keep students on track toward success.
- Be creative. Be compassionate. Be flexible.

The leadership team worked to be creative in the management of processes from the beginning. Managers were encouraged to work with staff members to accommodate working from home and caring for their families. The leadership team has stayed true to those values as they made difficult decisions over the course of the last few months.

Chancellor Plowman shared the COVID dashboard with the group. The dashboard can be found on our website (www.utk.edu/coronavirus/) and it is updated five days a week. We recommended students be tested prior to arriving on campus this fall. If each student had been tested when they arrived, they would need to be placed in quarantine until the results were known. Students have committed to taking a daily self-test. Currently we have 121 positive students. A live zoom call on Tuesdays and Fridays allows Chancellor Plowman to provide an update on current statistics, important information, and steps being taken to address current issues. A review of the current active self-isolations for students and staff was provided. Contract tracing is conducted on each case known to the university. Tests conducted in our student health center are generally taking 24 hours.

Beauvais asked for the typical number of tests being processed through the student health center. Currently approximately 25 tests per day are processed through the student health center. They have the capacity to process 2,000 per day. Currently athletes are tested weekly. Once football season begins, the athletes will be tested three times per week.

Tom Smith asked if the campus numbers and the state of Tennessee numbers compare. Chancellor Plowman stated that information is not available because the campus is not testing everyone, just those that are positive and close contacts. The positivity rate for the campus remains very low based on the total number of students.

A short list of preparations conducted prior to the beginning of class related to face covering distribution, wellness kit distribution, signage installation, information technology improvements and distribution, placement of hand sanitizer stations, and placement of plexiglass barriers. Tents will be installed across campus in the next few weeks. The Facilities Services team has worked extremely hard all summer to prepare for the return of faculty and students this fall.

Courses are being provided by three modalities – fully online, hybrid, and face-to-face. Faculty members participated in courses over the summer to gain knowledge of how to improve the delivery of their courses online to provide a quality experience for students. A student recently shared with Chancellor Plowman there had been significant improvements in her online class experience from spring. Chancellor Plowman reported she is teaching a one-hour class for first year students. Students are glad to be on campus to begin their college experience. Faculty and students have been flexible in the changing needs of how classes are conducted.

Chancellor Plowman expressed her concerns related to the welfare of faculty and staff who have not had a true break from the pandemic since it began in March. There have been no opportunities for a restorative time for all involved in this historic effort.

The incoming class for Fall 2020 is the largest incoming class on record. The transfer student total is up 11%. The current total student enrollment is 30,316, which is a 4% increase over last year. The Enrollment Management team did an incredible job over the summer to contact every admitted student.

Tom asked if there was information on in-state students that planned to go out of state, but changed to an in-state school due to issues related to the pandemic. Chancellor Plowman reported in-state, out of state, and international numbers are all up. We do not have numbers that reflect that specific change. We did receive a few late applications specifically related to last minute changes due to the pandemic.

Chancellor Plowman shared updated metrics related to student success and our formula funding. Our retention rate is up at 88%. Increasing our retention rate during this time is impressive. Our four-year graduation rate is 54%. The six-year graduation rate, which is highlighted in ratings, is 71%. Additional work is needed to improve both graduation rates.

Syreeta Vaughn asked if the six-year rate includes the programs that require five years to complete the requirements. Chancellor Plowman believes those have been removed, but will ask and confirm that information.

Chancellor Plowman provided an overview of the Division of Student Success and the areas of responsibility included in the division. Dr. Amber Williams was hired earlier this year to lead the division. The division has worked hard to identify needs within the student body and has implemented several programs. They implemented Vol Success Teams for each incoming freshman. The team includes an academic advisor, an academic coach, and a One Stop counselor. Each student is assigned a team and the members of the team reach out to the student to assist them throughout the semester. The division identified a need related to the retention of men of color. As a result, they developed programs to help improve retention of those students. New student orientation was revamped this summer in order to move it to a virtual setting. Move in day was reimagined and spread out over several days. The division is working hard to provide the students with a meaningful experience and support them on their road to success.



Chancellor Plowman address the second pandemic we face related to equity and inclusion. She shared some of the steps the university leadership has taken over the summer. Chancellor Plowman reached out to black faculty members that left over the last two years. The information she gained will be shared with deans and department heads in order to implement change. Chancellor Plowman expressed her commitment to improve recruitment, hiring, and the retaining of faculty and staff of color, as well recruiting and retaining students of color to be successful on this campus.

Syreeta asked how many faculty members have left in the past two years. Chancellor Plowman reported 13 have left over the last two years. When we have been successful in attracting faculty of color, we have not been successful in retaining those faculty members. Chancellor Plowman challenged department heads and deans to look at internal practices for opportunities to improve. Syreeta asked about the number of staff members lost. Staff members were not included in the list Chancellor Plowman worked from for her study. Tom asked if there were any trends from the calls she was able to share with the group. Chancellor Plowman shared the university could have been more aggressive in the effort to retain the faculty members. Several were contacted by other universities who offered better opportunities than they were offered within their current department. Syreeta asked if this was the same trend in the majority of faculty or is this a trend in minority faculty groups. Chancellor Plowman only looked at the one group due to huge loss they represented.

Chancellor Plowman is working with Provost Zomchick and the College of Arts and Sciences to advance our Africana Studies program to a department. A new director has been hired and we have made a commitment to hire additional faculty. We are working through the process of revising our student code of conduct, increasing student focused educational programs and activities focused on race. Chancellor Plowman and Mayor Indya Kincannon asked the Knoxville Police Department and the UT Police Department to work together on communication and training. A task force was established to review the names of all buildings on campus for any connections to a racist group or individual and to provide a list of potential naming opportunities.

Chancellor Plowman met with the athletic coaches, black faculty, the race collective, and additional groups on campus to create a list of action items. This Saturday our athletes have organized a protest on race. Chancellor Plowman sees this as the moment to make changes and progress to remove the practices, policies, and procedures that value one group over another. The campus leadership is committed to do the hard work to make the necessary changes.

John Tickle stated other universities are coming after our minority faculty members to hire them a way. There is a need to make this university the place where professors want to be. Chancellor Plowman agreed the university needs to nurture our professors, help them grow in order to keep them on this campus. Syreeta stated if the campus is the best place to be, regardless of color, faculty and staff are less likely to leave. Once an individual begins to look outside, other places become more palatable than where you are. Beauvais expressed the responsibility of all members of campus to make this an inclusive culture and community.



Beauvais expressed his appreciation for the work with the Knoxville Police Department and the City of Knoxville. Stories of overt hostilities against people of color in the Knoxville community shared by his African American colleagues is concerning. It is important to work with the local community to make sure people of color feel welcome when they leave campus as well.

Chancellor Plowman reported on the work related to the strategic vision. Work was paused this spring in order to adjust to the many changes due to the pandemic. The committee is back on track and working hard. The deans recently reviewed the document and provided feedback. We will have a final version for this group to review at an upcoming meeting.

As part of Chancellor Plowman's role, she serves on the SEC Presidents and Chancellors Committee. Chancellor Plowman shared her appreciation for the leadership Commissioner Greg Sankey has shown during this difficult time. This group meets weekly to discuss and address the needs and issues faced by the conference. This fall the SEC, Big 12, and ACC are going forward with a football schedule. Our football schedule will only be conference games. The in-conference games allow us to play other teams with the same testing protocols and procedures. We will play ten conference games and Neyland Stadium will be at 25% capacity. Tickets will be offered to season ticket holders and students. Athletics is reevaluating the safety of traditional game day events. Stadium seating is being reviewed. Only electronic tickets will be used.

Chancellor Plowman expressed her confidence in the medical directors associated with the SEC and the decisions that have been made. They are committed to moving forward until it becomes unsafe. Football players will be tested three times a week by an outside testing company. We anticipate a \$30-40 million loss in revenue with this plan. Should we not be able to play this season, the loss could double. The athletic department is working through the two scenarios, discussing potentially hard decisions that may need to be made, speaking with donors, and season ticket holders.

Based on his past service with the faculty senate budget and finance committee and athletics, Beauvais shared several areas of concern such as the need to protect the core mission of the academic side, cost containment in athletics related to decreased reserve funds, and the affect this will have on non-revenue sports this fall and spring. Chancellor Plowman stated it is her hope that fall sports, volleyball, soccer, and cross country, will go forward this fall. There are discussions related to what the season will look like and we will await the decision by the SEC. John Tickle shared information related to the financial relationship between athletics and academics. Chancellor Plowman reported COVID will require academics and athletics to reevaluate the business models they use going forward. John stated football revenues benefit the other sports on campus. Chancellor Plowman will share more related to finances when information is available.

Chancellor Plowman shared details on the costs of COVID through July 31, 2020. These costs included refunds for tuition, fees, and auxiliary costs, cleaning supplies, instruction and student support, and testing. We should have our waste water testing in place in early September. As of July 31, 2020, the expenses have cost the university \$57.9 million. We are fortunate to have



healthy reserve funds. We have taken additional steps to better position ourselves by pausing hiring, reducing our discretionary spending, eliminating travel, and put hold on some maintenance projects. Our auxiliaries took significant losses this year. Athletics has tapped into their reserves. We have asked our colleges to develop plans for possible reductions, but the hope is they are not needed. Our reserves continue to be healthy. Our strong enrollment and conservative budget places us in a good place.

Beauvais asked the status of the College of Nursing capital project. Chancellor Plowman reported nothing has changed with our recommendation to move forward with the project. It is the top project for the campus.

John Tickle cautioned cutting back on maintenance projects due to potential increased costs in the future.

Chancellor Plowman introduced and welcomed Karmen Jones, the Student Government Association President.

Chancellor Plowman spoke to the recent suspensions related to students not following the rules related to COVID restrictions. We are being transparent about the numbers and the actions we are taking. We need students to help us make this work. Many of our students are doing exactly what they are supposed to do. There is a small number of students that are struggling with how to gather in a safe manner. Karmen agreed that the majority of students are doing the right thing. Karmen shared Chancellor Plowman is doing a great job of keeping the students updated. SGA hosted a town hall to help increase awareness with the students' role in keeping the campus safe and healthy for all.

Syreeta asked about the plans for Labor Day weekend. Class will be held on Labor Day. Syreeta questioned what is being done for faculty since that Monday is a holiday. Beauvais and Karmen served on the calendar committee. The committee determined the start date of August 19th and eliminating fall break and Labor Day. This will allow classes to conclude prior to Thanksgiving and all final exams will be online. Provost Zomchick shared that staff will get a floating holiday for Labor Day to be used prior to December 31, 2020.

Chancellor Plowman reminded the group we are in unchartered territory and everyone is working hard to the best where everyone is concerned. John Tickle voiced his approval and appreciation for the hard work.

Provost Zomchick commented on how collaborative everyone has been to address issues. First year students are excited to be here and faculty want to teach as long as it is safe to do so. Provost Zomchick expressed his appreciation to the students, faculty, and the hard-working staff for all their efforts over the last few months.

Beauvais complimented Chancellor Plowman and Provost Zomchick for their early acknowledgement of faculty's authority over their teaching modality. Curriculum was altered in



order to accommodate students and needs within each discipline. Beauvais reminded the group of the need to be mindful of the technological divide for our students in socioeconomic compromised situations. We need to be sensitive in how we deliver education based on resources and backgrounds.

Alexia expressed her appreciation and acknowledge the difficult job of providing students with a meaningful experience while keeping faculty safe.

VI. 2020 UTK TITLE IX CAMPUS LANDSCAPE **Ashley Blamey, Title IX Coordinator**

Chancellor Plowman introduced Ashley Blamey the Title IX coordinator for the UT Knoxville campus and the UT System.

Ashley shared her goals for today's presentation are to share the changes made recently to the Title IX program and to meet the requirement of the State Comptroller's office to provide training so board members are familiar with the services we are providing on our campus.

Ashley reviewed the timeline of Title IX on this campus and the impact Pat Summitt had on Title IX in the state of Tennessee along with key changes over the last few years. The latest round of new regulations was handed down in May with the expectation they would be implemented by August 1, 2020.

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville is committed to an emphasis on prevention and transparency. Our annual reports provide our numbers and information on our prevention outcomes. We can always do more and be better, so we continually look for ways to improve. Ashley stressed the power in prevention and education.

Beauvais asked Ashley to share how staff receive training on this topic. Ashley shared that training is available to all staff and faculty online. The training has been revised based on feedback from previous years and will be part of the annual mandatory training modules this fall.

Chancellor Plowman asked if trends in the types or number of cases have been identified. Ashley reported cases are down this year due to so many people not being on campus. In 2019 there was a decline in the number of incidents in housing. The resident hall desk staff play a critical role in prevention. Providing them with training and tools they can use in their role has made an impact. Last year 10 cases were reported, which was down from 22 the prior year.

Alexia questioned how students learn how to access the resources available to them. Ashley stated an online module is provided prior to arriving on campus. Information on a variety of topics is shared with students through a variety of mixed media and events. Ashley will provide a handout for Susan to send out to the group with more information.



VII. CLOSING REMARKS

John Tickle stated he thinks the university is on the right track and is making good progress.

Our next meeting will be held on November 20, 2020.

VIII. ADJOURN

Tom Smith made a motion to adjourn. Syreeta Vaughn seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan E. England
Susan E. England, Secretary