



THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE, KNOXVILLE
CAMPUS ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES
October 15, 2021
KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Advisory Board met in the Zeanah Engineering Complex at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, October 15, 2021.

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, Mr. Tom Smith, Ms. Alexandra Szmuto

Ms. Alexia Poe and Ms. Syreeta Vaughn were unable to attend.

III. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Mr. Tom Smith made a motion to approve the August 13, 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 OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Donde Plowman, Chancellor

Chancellor Plowman welcomed the advisory board members and provided an overview of the notebook of information provided to each advisory board member. Chancellor Plowman called their attention to tab 5, which included the final strategic vision document. Substantial work has taken place since the advisory board last met. Each of the five goals now has transformational and operational metrics.

Chancellor Plowman highlighted two additional sections of the notebook. The new branding message guide located under tab 6 shares information on how we are beginning to talk about who we are and why it matters. Under tab 9 academic data can be found on each major, college, student credit hours, program size, and number of faculty by rank. The importance of the number of student credit hours will be discussed further in the budget model presentation.

Chancellor Plowman encouraged the board members to review the information following the meeting.

Chancellor Plowman shared several items of interest with the group. Almost 14,000 doses of vaccine have been administered on campus through the health center. As of yesterday, we currently had 32 positive cases on campus. The high from the fall was 180. We did begin the fall semester with a mask mandate and the students have been incredible in complying with our requests. We continue to remain flexible as we deal with the pandemic. We know 77% of faculty, 73% of staff, and approximately 64% of our students are vaccinated for an overall 70% vaccination rate. We are monitoring information related to President Biden's executive order. We accept federal grants fall and therefore we fall under the executive order. Our general counsel is reviewing the executive order and waiting for guidance from the state on implementation.

Our fall enrollment is over 31,000 with approximately 6,000 being first year students, which is a 9% increase. Several universities in the state and across the country are seeing declines in enrollment. The average ACT score for the first-year students is 28. Optional testing is currently in place due to the pandemic. We are watching what is happening nationally with regards to optional testing and will be discussing it further next week at the Board of Trustees meeting. Our incoming first-year class has representatives from 88 Tennessee counties. A new scholarship, Distinguished Tennessean, will be offered for next fall in order to attract outstanding students from each of our 95 counties. The incoming class has representatives from 44 states. There was a 19% increase in the number of students of color. Plans are in place to continue to diversify our student body. Students are glad to be back on campus and in the classroom this fall.

Work continues around our messaging for It Takes a Volunteer. It is important to communicate what we think it means to be a volunteer, what we want the student volunteer experience to be, and we want faculty and staff to think of themselves as a volunteer. Chancellor Plowman shared her experience at the Torch Night event to symbolically pass the torch to the incoming class in August. The event was planned for the approximately 6,000-member incoming class, but an additional 4,000 upper class students arrived to celebrate as well. It was an incredible experience to see and hear 10,000 students in Neyland Stadium pledging to show courage in big and small moments as Volunteers. A compilation of the videos currently being shared through different media outlets regarding the volunteer experience was shared with the group.

Chancellor Plowman spoke about the importance of research and how it is about creating a more just, more prosperous, and sustainable future for all. Chancellor Plowman shared information from a recent meeting with representatives from Volkswagen at their innovation hub at Cherokee Farm. They discussed the research one of our faculty members and his graduate students are doing related to smart bridges and the bridge unveiling event Chancellor Plowman attended in Morgan County. Hearing the faculty member discuss the impact their work will have on that community reinforced the work we do as a land grant research university. The same faculty member is also working with Volkswagen to develop lighter weight vehicles which require less

fuel and will eventually become battery operated cars. We need to make sure others are aware of the work being done on our campus.

Mr. Smith stated the campaign was excellent and provides a way to differentiate us from other universities. Mr. Beauvais Lyons commented on how it connects our work to our land grant mission.

Chancellor Plowman reported the strategic vision will go before the Board of Trustees next week. She expressed her appreciation of the input provided by this group.

Due to a gift from the Pilot Corporation, a new lounge for veterans was dedicated earlier this month. Our campus was named one of the most veteran friendly campuses in the country. One example of this campus' recognition of veterans was during the Torch Night ceremony in August. The first-year student chosen to accept the torch is also a veteran. When his history was shared during the ceremony, the crowd of 10,000 students spontaneously gave him a standing ovation. Veterans have unique learning and social needs, and we are working to meet those needs.

Two residence halls were dedicated since our last meeting. One in honor of Ms. Rita Geier, and one in honor Dr. Theotis Robinson. Both honorees were able to join us for the celebration.

US News and World Report rankings were released this fall. Overall, we are ranked 46th for public universities. Supply chain, business analytics, the Tickle College of Engineering, the Haslam College of Business, and our College of Nursing were recognized in the rankings. Chancellor Plowman stated we are not a great university because these things happen, these things happen because we are a great university. Forbes named us one of the top 10 employers in the state and we are working to improve to the top employer in the state.

Dr. Marianne Wanamaker was recently named the new Executive Director of the Howard H. Baker Center for Public Policy. She served on the White House Council of Economic Advisors. She is recognized as a brilliant economist and will work to move the Baker Center in the direction of the original vision of Senator Baker.

Chancellor Plowman introduced Dr. Amber Williams, Vice Provost for Student Success.

V. STUDENT SUCCESS PRESENTATION

Dr. Amber Williams, Vice Provost, Student Success

Dr. Williams thanked Chancellor Plowman and the advisory board members for allowing her to share some of the incredible things happening across the Division of Student Success.

Dr. Williams provided an overview of the different departments which fall under the Division of Student Success. The goal of the Division is to support each of our scholars in a way that allows them to understand their dreams, how to get to those dreams, and how to make them happen.

Dr. Williams shared how students have changed. Students want to know why they should take certain classes, why are they are important, and how they will impact their overall goal. Each student in the current incoming class and the fall 2020 class took the Clifton Strengths assessment. For both classes the top strength was restorative, which is about solving problems. The other top strengths were achiever, empathy, adaptability, and positivity. These students want to change the world themselves and do not want to wait for change to come to them.

Dr. Williams stated the goal is to teach students how to deepen their engagement on and off campus, persist successfully throughout the campus, and ensure they have a positive career outcome. The goal is to establish a foundation for the students by building on well-being. Well-being is evaluated by do I have the resources to be successful in the classroom, do I have the energy to go to TRECS and the gym, do I have the relationships to feel valued and important and have a sense of belongingness on campus. Students perform better when they have a foundation built on well-being.

Mr. Lyons asked how well-being will be measured related to their academic and extra-curricular experiences. Dr. Williams reported they work closely with Dr. Patrick Biddix and a consultant from UNC Chapel Hill who specializes in inclusive teaching practices. A pilot is currently being conducted in a biology course where the instructor adopted the well-being pedagogy. Dr. Biddix will assist with the assessments to help determine how the changes impact the students' success within the course.

Mr. Smith asked if success was defined as graduation. Dr. Williams stated success is defined by three things – deepening their engagement on campus, graduation rate, and positive career outcomes.

Ms. Szmuto asked if they work with graduate students on well-being. Dr. Williams shared they have direct oversight for undergraduate students. The council that advises the Division of Student Success hopes the things they put in place for undergraduates begins to seep into the culture and eventually impacts graduate students. Orientation for graduate students will be updated to address well-being in their orientation. Dr. Williams recently held two sessions for faculty focusing on how they use their strengths in their teaching and research. Great conversations in those sessions led to the scheduling of additional sessions.

Dr. Williams highlighted some of the changes to first-year student orientation. The new orientation includes virtual advising, online pre-orientation, and Big Orange Welcome Week, which takes place over six weeks.

Every first-year student is assigned a Vol Success Team consisting of an academic advisor, academic coach, one-stop counselor, and a peer mentor. By changing how we approach the students by proactively reaching out to them, we have been able to impact their success in a positive way. The more one on one coaching sessions students attended last year, the more improvement was noted in their GPA. Our Vol Study Center provides an opportunity for

students to work with a counselor to develop an individual study plan. We are working to change the perception of tutoring. We want students to understand successful students go to tutoring sessions. Supplemental instruction is provided through departments within the colleges. The departments provide upper class students with extensive training to lead small study sessions for specific classes. The use of all these tools will assist us to impact our retention rate.

Chancellor Plowman commented on how much work it takes to increase the retention rate. Since retention rates are part of the state funding formula, it is important for us to continue to find ways to reach students and provide them with the tools needed to succeed.

The Vols Start Back program was implemented this fall in order to welcome three classes of students back to campus – the incoming first-year students, the students who attended primarily remotely last year, and the class sent home in spring 2020. Over 4,500 students participated and those that completed the program received a small stipend from federal funds we received.

A new Success Academy began this fall in response to feedback received from male students of color. Black and Latinx men experience isolation, lower perception of personal success, which leads to lower persistence. The new cohort of 115 men of color will have opportunities to take classes together, leadership opportunities, and access to faculty mentors. Mr. Smith asked what attracted them to participate in the program. Dr. Williams responded they intentionally called it an academy, focused on creating a community for the members of the cohort, and provided a \$2,000 scholarship that can be renewed each year if they maintain a high level of participation. Mr. Lyons stated this could provide a pipeline to graduate school.

Dr. Williams shared they are working on new initiatives for first generation students that will encourage the participation of faculty and staff who were first generation graduates as mentors.

A new Veteran Success Institute will be in place by next fall to provide customized support, peer coaches, and social opportunities for our veteran students.

Dr. Williams stated the work in each of the areas mentioned today will help increase our retention rate. Mr. Carter asked how we identify those students that do not feel like they belong or are dealing with mental health issues that keep them from interacting with others. Dr. Williams stated the partnership with Student Life and feedback from faculty members assists in identifying students at risk. Ms. Szmuto asked if exit interviews are conducted with those students that leave without completing their degree. Dr. Williams reported there is no survey at this time, but they are looking in to how to conduct one that would provide valuable information.

Chancellor Plowman thanked Dr. Williams for speaking with the group.

VI. NEW BUDGET MODEL PRESENTATION

Mr. Chris Cimino, Sr. Vice Chancellor, Finance and Administration

Chancellor Plowman welcomed Mr. Chris Cimino to share an update on the progress of moving to a new budget allocation model.

Mr. Cimino shared the budget model for our university has remained essentially the same for the last 125 years. The current model is confusing and works at a high central level and forces colleges to live within the funds given to them. Moving to a new model that is more transparent and allows us to be strategic and plan for the future.

Mr. Cimino provided an overview of the different models being used across higher education. A customized incentive-based budget model was chosen for our campus. This model allows for a high degree of central control and local units will keep a majority of the revenue. Some of our programs produce a lower number of student credit hours and have high costs associated with salaries and program costs and will require university support. Ms. Szmutko asked if this model will help protect liberal arts programs. Mr. Cimino responded the model is designed to assist those areas. Each college will be assessed a participation fee, which will then be invested back into the areas that need additional support.

Mr. Lyons asked if we had information on how other institutions handle this type of model. Mr. Cimino shared they worked with a consulting firm, Huron, which has extensive experience with multiple universities that have gone through this same process. They also looked at members of the SEC and our peers across the country. In fact, the participation fee was originally 18%, but in researching lessons learned by other universities determined the participation fee should be 15%. Mr. Cimino stated the new model will remain in place for 3-5 years in order to gather data and watch for trends and determine if changes are needed.

Mr. Cimino reviewed the process beginning in 2019 with the establishment of the steering committee, which included a wide representation across campus, campus forums, and information sessions with guest speakers from other universities that had been through this process. The goal was to establish a budget model to support the mission and vision of the university, facilitate investments in the colleges, foster innovation and collaboration, allocate resources transparently, consistently, in a straightforward methodology, and provide accessible, predictable, and accurate information to promote trust. We are currently in a transition year and will roll out the new model July 2022. Mr. Lyons asked what type of impact the new model would have on differential tuition. Mr. Cimino stated any funds currently dedicated to a college will remain with the college.

Mr. Cimino explained how revenue will be handled under the new model. Tuition will be split between the college of instruction (80%) and the college of record (20%). Financial aid will remain centrally and distributed to the colleges. All course fees and differential tuition will remain with the appropriate units. Funds received from federal grants and contracts will be used to support research at the college level and a portion will be shared with the Office of Research,

Innovation, and Economic Development. A participation fee of 15% will be charged to each college based on the tuition and state appropriation dollars they receive.

We made the decision to distribute the state allocations received based on the areas used in the state formula funding as follows: 43.5% undergraduate instruction, 17.5% undergraduate student success, 21% graduate student success, and 18% research support. Chancellor Plowman stated the budget model should be an incentive for colleges to grow majors, student credit hours, and create courses that could be attractive to students outside of their majors. It will provide an opportunity for colleges to be entrepreneurial.

Mr. Smith reminded the group of how much the university relies on the state legislature for significant funding and encouraged fellow board members to express appreciation when they have contact with members of the legislature.

Mr. Cimino provided an overview of the twelve cost pools that will be used to support unit costs under the new model. Identifying the twelve cost pools will allow for transparency in the management of the funds and each cost pool will be reviewed for cost variances on an annual basis. Mr. Smith commented on the definitive way to look at costs. Mr. Lyons asked how library and IT costs will be applied across campus. Mr. Cimino stated we will begin with the same rate across all square footage on campus. This number will be reviewed and updated as we work through the initial year. Mr. Cimino explained the 15% participation fee charged to each college will assist with the supplemental funding for those areas with negative margins. Mr. Smith asked if the next budget will be based on the new model. Mr. Cimino stated the budget presented to this group for approval in May 2022 will be based on the new model.

Mr. Cimino complimented his team on the incredible amount of time and work they have done and continue to do in order to transition to a new budget model.

Mr. Smith commended Mr. Cimino and his team on the work they have done and will continue to do with regards to the new budget model. Mr. Tickle stated the university is fortunate to have Mr. Cimino who has the knowledge and experience to take on this challenge and complemented Chancellor Plowman and Mr. Cimino on the way they work together to better the university.

Mr. Lyons questioned how the new model would prepare us for future economic downturns. Mr. Cimino responded the new model will allow for shared responsibility to determine how best to handle what we face in the future.

VII. CLOSING REMARKS

Chancellor Plowman thanked the advisory board members for their attendance and stated she hopes the information shared today will prepare the group for the upcoming budget presentation in spring 2022.



VIII. ADJOURN

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Susan E. England

Susan E. England, Secretary