

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT MARTIN ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes of the Winter Meeting

The winter meeting of The University of Tennessee at Martin Advisory Board was held at 1:00 p.m. (CDT) on Friday, January 20, 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

Chair Sparks requested a roll call to bring the meeting to order. The roll was called by Edie Gibson, Secretary to the Board, with the following members present:

Hal Bynum
Monice Hagler
Iman Ahmed (via Zoom)
Art Sparks
Anderson Starling
Johnny Woolfolk

With six members of the Advisory Board in attendance, five onsite and Iman Ahmed via Zoom, a quorum was announced. Ms. Ahmed acknowledged her attendance from a public space. Julia Wells was unavailable to attend the meeting. Others in attendance included UT Martin administrative and leadership staff.

Chair Sparks began the meeting with a reminder that the proceedings are open to the public and streaming via the campus website with a recording to be posted on the AB website following the meeting. The meeting was streamed live for the convenience of the University community, the general public, and the media. All votes were taken by roll call in compliance with the Advisory Board Bylaws.

II. Opening Remarks

Next, Chair Sparks welcomed the Advisory Board members and campus guests to the winter 2023 meeting before inviting Chancellor Carver to offer a campus welcome. Chancellor Carver thanked the Advisory Board members for their participation the meeting and for continued leadership on the Advisory Board. He then yielded his time to begin the Board's business.

III. Approval of Minutes

Chair Sparks directed the members to the first item of business, approval of the minutes from the regularly scheduled fall meeting of the Advisory Board held on September 23, 2022. With no corrections or modifications, the fall meeting minutes were unanimously approved in a Roll Call vote.

Motion: Monice Hagler moved to adopt the UT Martin Advisory Board meeting minutes for the September 23, 2022, meeting, as presented in the meeting materials, and Anderson Starling seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

Chair Sparks updated the members that the UT Board of Trustees approved, as submitted by the Advisory Board, UTM's Strategic Plan – Prepare for Takeoff 2.0 (2022-2025) during the Board's fall meeting on October 28, 2022.

IV. Revision and Approval of Meeting Schedule 2023-2024

To ensure the Advisory Board quorum was maintained for the second action item, Chair Sparks brought forward the request to establish UTM's Advisory Board regular meeting schedule for 2023 – 2024. The proposed meeting schedule was constructed to coincide with the UT Board of Trustee meetings and materials timelines. Chair Sparks explained that Student Member, Iman Ahmed, who is serving a Legislative Internship with Senator Raumesh Akbari from District 29 (representing part of Shelby County), may need to leave the meeting early.

Motion: Hal Bynum moved to adopt the UT Martin Advisory Board regular meeting schedule for 2023-2024, as presented in the meeting materials, and Johnny Woolfolk seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

V. UT Martin Athletics Update

Returning to the formal agenda schedule, Chair Sparks invited Kurt McGuffin, Vice Chancellor and Director of Athletics, to the podium to share an overview of UT Martins' Athletics program. VC McGuffin outlined his presentation addressing "three Cs - how our sports programs perform competitively, in the classroom, and in the community."

Competitively during the past 5-6 years, six of UTM's teams won 10 conference championships as well as set a record last year with four OVC Championships. Additionally, Skyhawk athletes finished the year with their highest ranking in the Ohio Valley Conference Commissioner's Cup, measuring athletic competition success among conference universities. Historically, our women's basketball has done well by earning six championships, and more recently, an increasing number of our sports teams are competing at that top level.

Since 2017, not only have the number of UTM student-athletes increased to ~500, but the academic success of those students has exceeded. He attributed the enhanced academic success to an increase from one to three in the number of academic advisers to support at-risk athletes. NOTE: Academic recognitions included: 161 recipients of the Athletic Director's Honor Roll (3.0 GPA) for 2021-22 year, 261 recipients of the OVC Commissioner's Honor Roll (3.25 GPA) for Fall 2021 semester, plus 248 recipients for Spring 2022 semester. A record number (28) student-athletes earned an OVC Medal of Honor (4.0 GPA) during 2021-22. Another significant accomplishment achieved recognized cumulative GPA gains which coincided with a growth in the number of student athletes; in 2017, ~330 athletes averaged a cumulative GPA of 2.76 compared to ~500 athletes averaging a cumulative 3.29 GPA for the Fall 2022 semester.

In highlighting our student-athlete community involvement, VC McGuffin noted that all student-athletes must fulfill a 12-hour community service requirement. This year's community service projects included volunteer work with Dresden's tornado clean-up, Captain's Pantry/Canned Caravans, We Care Christmas Tree and Food Distribution, Lifeline Blood Drives, and an upcoming event collecting spare "change drive" for Special Olympics.

Notable department upgrades acknowledged hiring new staff members – an academic advisor (July 2022) through NACDA McLendon Foundation funding, the first digital content creator (2017-18), and a Sport Turf Manager to oversee all fields. With the purchase of a software upgrade (Jumpforward), we

enhanced compliance and recruitment monitoring and enabled direct messaging to all student-athletes. By launching a Partnership with ESPN+, we provided a platform to stream and televise football and basketball competitions and to broadcast 36 other events supported by our awarding winning professional and student staff. In other progress, Athletics relaunched UTMSports.com via SIDEARM and partnered with NOCAP to provide NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) opportunities for student-athletes. UTM's sports programs are under an exclusive Under Armour sponsorship/contract.

VC McGuffin acknowledged that the program's Athletics staff is the program's biggest asset but added that when a prospective student-athlete visits our campus, facilities play a significant role in the recruitment process. All outdoor sports have new video boards, and several teams have new playing surfaces (i.e.: new artificial turf at the stadium and improvements to several natural grass facilities with more to come). Beach volleyball received a new court in 2018-19, and Women's Basketball renovated its Locker Room in 2019-20. Other enhancements were funded by a ~\$200,000 NCAA grant awarded to Ashley Bynum constructing an academic service center and enabled relevant programming (mental health and career planning) for student-athletes. Future upgrades are planned to include new LED lights in the Fieldhouse, a baseball practice facility, installation of artificial turf and outdoor fencing at baseball, renovation of track complex, upgrades and expansion of the Carroll football facility, upgrades to the rodeo and equestrian facilities, and aesthetic enhancements in the Elam Center (men's basketball locker room, for center-hung video board/shot clock upgrades/scores table replacement, resurfacing the arena floor, and replacing goals.)

Another crucial priority for Athletics is to increase fundraising to ~\$2 million annually. The achievement of this goal encompasses annual giving, facilities donations, enhancements to operating budgets, and special projects, which will be facilitated by Advancement's Vice Chancellor Charley Deal and staff member Julius McNair. UTM student-athlete participation levels grew from 397 in 2017-18 to 511 in 2021-22, generating a corresponding revenue impact that grew from \$3.1 million in 2017-18 to \$4.5 million in 2021-22. This influx represents external funds in the form of Pell Grants, parents, loans, plus other resources, excluding grant-in-aid funds. Credit for the revenue influx goes to our great coaches, who recruit walk-ons and expand team opportunities with partial scholarship athletes. Consider UT Martin student-athlete participants represent 469 full-time equivalents (FTE) of the university's overall 4,550 student body FTE. Also interesting to note, our 305 student-athletes account for the majority of the total student body's 585 non-resident/out-of-state students.

VC McGuffin compared NCAA Financial Aid limits to UTM's Grant-in-Aid budgets. As an example, the NCAA allows baseball to offer 11.7 scholarships (valued at full out-of-state tuition) to be spread out over 27 athletes. In other words, few baseball athletes will receive a full ride. UTM funds 10 out-of-state baseball scholarships, representing a 1.7 deficit of the NCAA maximum allowance. Overall, UTM is eligible to contribute an additional 16.7 out-of-state grant-in-aid scholarships to its men athletes, but UTM has got to do better by fully funding its women's programs. Although not his preference to cut any sport, he acknowledged one approach to addressing the scholarship deficit is to return to a recent campus decision discontinuing women's tennis (effective with the 2023 season) and redistribute those eight out-of-state scholarships to our existing UTM women's sport programs. Utilizing those eight scholarships, UTM could elevate five women's teams (basketball, soccer, softball, cross country, and volleyball) to their NCAA scholarship maximum levels and significantly increase the number of women's track scholarships. The potential for enhancing our women's participation opportunities through such a redistribution would be transformational coupled by plans to improve the existing track facility. Eventually, UTM plans to develop a strategy to fully-fund equestrian and track scholarships. At present, UTM does not plan to add any new women's sports that does not carry high participation roster (i.e.: a lacrosse team offers a maximum of 10 scholarship for 40 athletes).

Four prominent NCAA issues remain in the news - 1.) the NCAA Transformation Committee, 2.) Name, Image, Likeness (NIL), 3.) Transfer Portal, and 4.) Conference Updates. Approximately 18 months ago, the NCAA convened its Conference Commissioners and ADs to establish criteria for Division-I level sports programs, subsequently approved during the January convention. VC McGuffin offered to present an overview of the NCAA Transformation Committee approved changes at an upcoming meeting. In other news, the NIL compensation contracts for student-athletes has hit UTM for several team members. A more significant impact for institutions our size will be felt by larger institutions stockpiling athletes utilizing preferred walk-on status with NIL package thereby ensuring team depth and minimizing competitor's access to athletes. The Transfer Portal continues to impact UTM by increasing the mobility of athletes as well as limiting team openings for high school seniors associated with the backlog of COVID eligible athletes. To emphasize his point, he noted that 5,000 football players entered the Transfer Portal this year and 25% of all college men's basketball players entered the portal last year. UTM must find a way to address these challenges. Lastly, the OVC conference is still actively pursuing football playing institutions to address recent membership changes. In the meantime, the Big South Conference four-year arrangement is a good fix for us and our regional competition. Losing regional rivalries is disappointing for UTM, but our longest travel is still only 5.5 hrs. to compete.

When asked what keeps him up, Kurt responded that Athletics budgets remain his most concerning issue, explaining the cost of bus travel increased from \$800 three years ago to \$3,000 this year, similar to increases in hotel and food expenses. Finding new revenue resources remains a priority with conversations underway. Kurt added that game guarantees associated with football, men's basketball, and women's basketball, are incorporated into our annual budget process.

Chair Sparks expressed his appreciation to AD McGuffin for the informative presentation and sharing his future plans to Skyhawk Athletics.

VI. Report on Transfers and Transfer Pathways

Next up, Chair Sparks called on the Provost and Sr. Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Phil Cavalier, to report on Transfers and Transfer Pathways. Before beginning his formal presentation, Provost Cavalier complimented VC McGuffin for his focus on and understanding of the vital relationship between academics and athletics. He added that Kurt cares about winning as well as the student-athlete academic progress and individual wellbeing. Athletics partnership within the university brings speakers to campus to address the full student experience, embracing topics from mental health to celebrating the 50th anniversary of Title IX.

Provost Cavalier clarified a difference between a transfer student and a dual enrollment student. Transfers are students who come to college with college credit earned from a previous two- or four-year institution received after graduating from high school. Dual Enrollment students earned their college credit while attending high school and are therefore classified as an entering or first-year student when enrolling post high school.

The Provost noted that today's presentation focused transfer students, meaning students who attended another higher education institution before transferring their earned college credits toward a UTM degree. UTM remains intentional about recruiting transfers as these students represent more than 30% of our total new/incoming student enrollments and are essential to a strong enrollment pipeline. Historically, our campus recruitment plans emphasized first-time students, but creating a separate focus on transfer students makes better sense. If you consider that transfer students are within a year or two of achieving their graduation goal, this population generates enhanced support in formula funding and expedites regional workforce access. Typically, the transfer population enrolls with less than 60 credit hours

earned, meaning the average transfer student needs a little more than two semesters to complete their degree.

As stipulated by the Tennessee legislature, Transfer Pathways represent agreements between the state's community colleges and four-year institutions and are designed to expedite degree progression for students who completed courses in a designated (major) pathway with an associate degree aligned to a parallel bachelor's degree at a state four-year institution. Pathway agreements are developed by faculty and administrative subject experts at four-year and two-year institutions and coordinated under THEC authority. Currently, UTM has articulation agreements with both JSCC and DSCC, predominantly around education majors. Development of additional articulation agreements is a priority in UTM's Strategic Plan.

Provost Cavalier pointed out that the university's four- and six-year graduation rates consistently have been ranked in the low- to mid-50% range. In recent fall transfer retention data, the rate is running ahead of this year's freshmen retention rate, but UTM has room to improve to reach its 80% benchmark goal. Brad Baumgardner will share more freshmen retention highlights and initiatives during his upcoming Retention presentation.

The Provost discussed Pell-eligible and first-generation transfer data sets by explaining that campus trendlines parallel with historical national data identified as at-risk. On a more positive note, UTM's data comparison exhibits smaller gaps between the general population and in subcategories. Although not satisfied with our current success rates, the Provost recognized the great strides achieved with our students by our faculty, advisors, and Student Success counselors. NOTE: In 2019, COVID hit students causing an arbitration in the data, but UTM is back on path with an enhanced trajectory.

Transfer students offer an opportunity to make a significant impact in a shorter timeframe. To this end, UTM established a new initiative called a "Transfer Boot Camp" to create a "student cohort" synergy, expediting campus integration and exposure to campus culture. Ramping up this experience on a larger scale may require some additional programmatic changes. The campus plans to add a Transfer Advisor, supplementing the transfer experience and other unique initiatives. UTM added a Transfer Transcript Evaluator to expedite college transcript assessment within a 24- to 48-hour cycle. Explore advising opportunities for first-year JSCC students interested in completing a UTM degree at the same Center is another focus.

As we looking toward the future, UTM administrators anticipate an influx to the transfer pipeline by 2024 - 2025 due to the opening of Blue Oval City. The influx will bring a significant increase to the population of adult learners who hold college credits without a degree and of employees interested in navigating the career ladder at Ford or an associated supplier. UTM is uniquely positioned to serve these adult learners through one of our five Centers (especially Somerville and Ripley) or through the online BIS (as a degree completion program).

VII. Retention Update

Chair Sparks welcomed Dr. Brad Baumgardner, Director of Retention, to the podium to discuss Retention efforts. Dr. Baumgardner credited the Student Success Center team's work involving student progression (measured by credit hour benchmarks), retention (measured semester to semester progress), and persistence (measured by fall-to-fall continuation).

The presentation focused on a five-year historical overview (backward focused/lag indicators) of undergraduate student progression represented by fall-to-fall retention and undergraduate student credit hour progressions to the next classification level or graduated. A new Retention Dashboard allows

campus users to disaggregate and drill down by cohort, assess real time on demand reporting from the student database, and collaborate with other campus teams to address knowledge gaps with targeted communication tools. Additionally, the team has mapped infrastructure processes from the student perspective and analyzed measurable HIPs (high impact practices) like supplemental instruction and face-to-face meetings. UTM staff have assimilated information on barriers, streamline timelines, and eliminate bureaucratic procedures. These facts are incorporated in our Strategic Plan and as five key dimensions of 1.) identification and elimination of administrative barriers to registration and retention, 2.) bolstering and developing a topflight advising program, 3.) revision of our first year experience course – GENS 101, 4.) increasing our student success in classes with high enrollment of high DFW rates, and 5.) working to increase a sense of belonging among our students.

Much of this retention work is already ongoing as documented in our Strategic Plan and our Strategic Enrollment Plan. The team is further exploring registration campaign (during enrollment windows) to encourage timely enrollment utilizing a strategic communication plan. A collaborative process engages the Student Success office, faculty, and volunteers to contact our students ensuring an understanding of the registration process and any steps that they need to complete.

Another key retention project will target Lottery Scholarship recipients. Hope Lottery, the state's generous financial award, is monitored after the student attempts 24-credit hour. To ensure students know continuation requirements, staff monitor the student's Hope GPA along with their institutional GPA, (which often differ), and intervene with next steps, as needed. NOTE: University GPA allows for students to repeat more than one course and allows dual or transfer credit to impact the institutional GPA, while Hope GPA allows only a one course repeat and looks only at courses earned after high school. For those that do not retain their Hope Scholarship, our staff help students think about other financial options with time to act before the issue becomes a non-starter.

Recently, the campus leadership repurposed a vacant position to hire a student success transfer coordinator. This new position also leads our supplemental instruction program and is making a positive difference for our students. Campus stakeholders receive periodic persistency and retention reports to guide them throughout registration periods. Next steps, will be to develop a new point-to-point enrollment and retention tracker to identify trends over time.

Although many of these initiatives have only been in place for a short time, staff are noticing early returns. During the 2021-2022 enrollment cycle, UTM's overall undergraduate retention gained 1.9%, transfer retention gained 5%, overall progression metric (benchmarked at 30 hrs., 60 hrs. and 90 hrs. to graduation) gained 1.49%, and retention for all freshmen (full-time and part-time) gained 1.6%.

During a summer enrollment campaign, the staff identified 569 students, who attended UTM in the spring and were eligible to return but had not registered for fall classes. Many of those students had an impediment to enrolling or were postponing registration until later. During a 10-week period, the Student Success staff engaged in a campaign to email, text, and call these students, successfully registering 268 students prior to the drop period. For those who did not register, the staff cataloged reasons, establishing trends for tracking purposes. To further make this point, 268 students represent 5.6% of our overall undergraduate degree seeking students retained from the previous fall. Expect future campaigns.

Correlating persistence from fall to spring and retention from fall-to-fall over time confirms a strong trendline with just a little falloff during COVID. Attrition from persistence to retention rates is decreasing, which is the goal. In 2021, UTM recorded its best attrition rate, meaning the smallest loss recorded during the past five years, ~ 1% from the previous year. The average persistence AY2017-2020 (5-Yr) rate was 90.89% compared to the AY2021 rate of 89.16%, which is a significant movement. Although the Spring 2023 census numbers are not final, preliminary data show an undergraduate

persistence of 90.7% and a total first-time, full-time freshmen persistence of 90.1%. If these trends continue, we will likely realize an overall retention gain in the upcoming fall. None of this work would be possible without full campus support. Brad explained that UTM is able to disaggregate student data by college and by major but tracking frequent changes in majors does present confusion in monitoring success rate data by college or major. Majors with a tightly prescriptive plan of study impact the modeling tool. He added, it is better to spotlight “best practices” and share those findings with academic departments as partners to offer a deeper understanding of what is working best among our units. Anderson Starling expressed his personal appreciation for the work of Dr. Baumgardner and his team in retaining UTM students. Brad noted that 1% of UTM’s student population represents 46 students, that’s 46 students who have an opportunity to stay in college to earn an education and gain opportunities for a lifetime. It’s not about percentage points on a piece of paper, it’s really about the students.

Chair Sparks express the Board’s appreciation for the informative presentation and for the excellent work that is being done for UTM students.

VIII. Comments by the Chancellor

Chancellor Carver expressed his appreciation to the Advisory Board members for their continued commitment of time. He further addressed two points, noting the pandemic was horrible for everyone and was challenging without a playbook for how to operate, but when we look back at these reports, he stressed he could not be prouder of this leadership team and our faculty. Although UTM has always had a reputation as a high touch campus, the pandemic made us focus more intently to identify our holes with retention, and better manage our budgets. Coming through this time, makes me appreciate our UTM team, we became more efficient and better at serving and meeting the needs of students. Today’s presenters are an example of the reason that UTM shines.

Secondly, he stated that his gratitude to the Board members for caring about our campus and carrying the UTM flag everywhere they go. He acknowledged the members support us monetarily and are great ambassadors for us in the community, but also let us know when we need to do better.

Starting in February, UTM will host its 23rd Civil Rights Conference. A schedule of the month-long slate of speakers and activities is available on the UTM website. This year’s program will focus on how this movement impacted music, art, history, and religious movements. An additional focus will target mental health and wellness programming. We are told that UTM’s conference is the second longest, continuing Civil Right Conference in the country.

IX. Closing Remarks by Chair

Chair Sparks encouraged each Board member to continue to support the university and to attend as many university functions as schedules permit. Although Chancellor Carver has been generous with recognizing his team, this Board would be remiss to not recognize the Chancellor for his leadership. For every ship there is a rudder, Keith Carver has done a great job steering this ship. He is legendary for his relationship with students. With no other business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting of the Advisory Board will be the annual Summer Meeting scheduled for May 26, 2023, held in-person.

VIII. Adjournment

With no further business to come before the Board, a motion to adjourn was made by Hal Bynum and seconded by Iman Ahmed. The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eddie Gibson, Secretary