

# 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. (CST), on Friday, January 10, 2020, in the Boling University Center, Room 206, on the campus of The University of Tennessee at Martin.

### **I. Call to Order and Roll Call**

Advisory Board Chair Art Sparks welcomed the Advisory Board members and guests to the regular winter meeting of the UT Martin Advisory Board and 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:

Katie Ashley  
Hal Bynum  
Chris Caldwell  
Monice Hagler (joined by telephone)  
Art Sparks  
Julia Wells

With five members of the Advisory Board present on site, a quorum was announced. Monice Hagler joined the meeting alone from her office phone. Lauren Carter was unable to participate. Administrative staff, faculty, members of the public, and media representatives were present. The meeting was recorded via Zoom for uploading to the UT Martin Advisory Board website following the meeting.

### **II. Opening Remarks**

Chair Sparks began the meeting by calling on Chancellor Carver to make comments. Chancellor Carver thanked the Advisory Board members for their time and interest in UT Martin before presenting each member of the Advisory Board copies of two books, which have been the focus of campus discussions and presentations this past year. The first book entitled, *Educated*, by Tara Westover, served as a common reader for the new ENGAGE Initiative and as an opportunity to open campus dialogue regarding UTM's mission and strategic plan goal directed at developing responsible citizens to lead and serve in a diverse world. The second book entitled, *What Made Maddy Run*, by Kate Fagan, former ESPN columnist, opened-up conversations on topics related to student and student-athlete health and wellness.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

Chair Sparks directed the Advisory Board to a copy of the minutes from the regular scheduled meeting of the Advisory Board on September 20, 2019. The Advisory Board considered the minutes for approval.

**Motion: Hal Bynum moved to adopt the UT Martin Advisory Board meeting minutes for the September 20, 2019, meeting, as presented in the meeting materials, and Katie Ashley seconded the motion. A roll call vote on the motion was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.**

#### **IV. Student Life Overview & Panel Discussion**

At the request of Chair Sparks, Chancellor Carver recognized Dr. Andy Lewter, who is completing his first year as Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, to provide some insights directed at the Student Affairs core of student success, student well-being, student development, and student experiences.

Dr. Lewter summarized that the organizational overview of the Division of Student Affairs encapsulates 10 functional areas: Student Life, Campus Recreation, Residence Life, Career Planning & Development, Care Team, Student Leadership, Student Health & Counseling, Multicultural Affairs, Disability Services & Testing, and Student Conduct.

In review, Residence Life staff oversee six residential life facilities, which offer supportive environments for students to live and learn. Highlighting recent success, Housing has seen a 25% growth in our Living-Learning Communities and an overall increase of 6% in occupancy during fall 2019. Dr. Lewter reported that UTM provides the most affordable housing of all four-year institutions in the state. He further noted that national surveys back-up our student satisfaction, which significantly ranks ahead of our competitors in overall program effectiveness, overall learning, and overall satisfaction, just to name a few.

Dr. Lewter noted that a few of UTM's aging residential facilities have some maintenance issues to address, which include replacing a couple of roofs and refreshing the Village apartment buildings. He further commented that students notice new furniture and fresh aesthetics more than they observe infrastructure issues, but if the roof leaks or the hot water is not working, they are quick to report it. At present, UTM utilizes a 5-10 year maintenance plan, rather than a detailed 20-year plan, which is more congruent in planning for a national enrollment cliff associated with a declining birth rate. Price point remains a primary consideration in offering a range of housing options.

Captain's Pantry and Skyhawks Share are two programs launched during spring 2019 to assist students with food insecurity issues. Skyhawks Share allows students on a meal plan to donate unneeded meal(s) from their plans to other students. Additionally, UTM has two food pantries on campus, one in Cooper Hall and the second in Ellington Hall, to stock donations. Last year, Housing received 7,000 items for the food pantry with an additional 733 meals donated to 64 students.

The campus has more than 150 registered student organizations, including our sororities and fraternities, responsible for providing in excess of 13,500 hours of community services during 2018-19. UTM's Multicultural Affairs staff offer an important component to campus programming with a focus on increased visibility and emphasis on diversity. A couple of notable achievements include creating a Latin/Hispanic Student Association, continuing to grow the Multicultural Graduation Celebration, and the dedication of the NPHC Greek Garden at Unity Circle, recognizing our nine local chapter of the NPHC fraternities and sororities, also known as the Divine Nine.

Focused on keeping our students active, Campus Recreation staff are housed in a great facility, which saw 100,000 student visits last year. Rec staff provide opportunities for intramurals, group fitness, open recreation, aquatics, sports clubs, and outdoor recreation. Equally important, this unit offers employment to ~100 UTM students.

Assisting students with career readiness services, Career Planning and Development provided programming for ~400 students with resumes and mock interviews this year and brought more than 40 employers on-campus to recruit. The office takes its programming to visit the colleges and five Centers via a Mobile Career Service component. Another exciting initiative of the CPAD programming, referred to as the Captains Closet, provides free, gently-used professional attire in a boutique-style environment for students preparing to interview or meet with a potential employer.

Crucial to the success of a growing population of students is Disability Services and Testing, developed to implement services allowing equal access to higher education for students with disabilities. The office supported 400 registered students for accommodations during fall 2019 as well as proctored 138 tests during finals week. The Testing Services component of this unit provides a variety of testing services from academic major tests to national standardized testing such as GRE, GMAT, Praxis, and ACT. In 2019, Testing Services administered 3,000 tests.

Helping to keep our students healthy and in the classroom, Student Health and Counseling offices offer stay-well and preventive health care, and counseling services. (The health clinic reported an increase of 100 more visits this semester, representing 2,538 total health visits in fall 2019, and the counseling clinic reported an additional 30-40 more counseling visits, totaling 657 counseling visits in fall 2019.) The office served an (unduplicated headcount) of 3,900 students during the 2018-19 academic year. The Care Team, comprised of professional staff and faculty members, provides one important aspect of attention and support. Anyone may utilize the automated alert system or call in a referral, which will be followed-up, no matter the concern. In fall 2017, the Care Team received 45 referrals; the number of referrals has grown from 130 in fall 2018 to 224 in fall 2019.

To facilitate a deeper dive in student care, four members of the Care Team, who also serve as members of the Crisis Response Team, formed a panel to discuss how the team functions and what services are coordinated. Panelists included Ryan Martin of Residence Life, serving on the Care Team and Crisis (on call) Response Team; Carly Jo Archer, social work student-intern from Union University, serving as the Care Team Case Manager; Shannon Perry, Director of Student Conduct, serving as Care Team Leader, and John Abel, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs, supporting all student service needs.

The panelists shared that the Crisis Response Team is comprised of six professional staff responds 24-7 to Hawk Alerts received online and by phone. These six professionals take turns triaging referrals, which can range from a concern that someone has expressed a statement about hurting himself/herself to a call involving a stumped toe. Crisis responses are typically addressed in just minutes, 24-hours a day, providing a range of support, including sitting with someone in crisis at the hospital waiting to be evaluated or until a personal support system arrives. Other responses may include reminding someone to call home to check-in or connecting a student to an appropriate service like counseling or tutoring. The primary objective of these services is to assist our students to be successful at this university, rebound and to move on to complete their degree.

Since the initiation of the Crisis Response Team, the campus has seen an increase in the number of contacts but a reduction in the number of crisis events, because the team is reaching a student before the crisis or pinnacle event. The Crisis Response Team, with the assistance of the case manager position, now has an additional mechanism allowing the team to track student cases, becoming aware of any other issues, beyond the current conversation. UTM's housing staff are certified in QPR training for suicide.

In discussion of high traffic times, the team plans to delve deeper into the data, but anecdotally noted surges in contacts around midterms and finals, an increase in student welfare checks before breaks, and an uptick in freshmen during the first two to three weeks of the semester. Although, FERPA guidelines prohibit the university from discussing grades and student conduct cases without written student consent, in the case of a student in a life crisis, the university is allowed by law to reach out to a parent or other family support systems. If a student is in crisis, that information is shared with the Crisis Response Team, but typical counseling sessions are confidential and not shared with the Crisis Response Team. Of the 244 referrals in the fall, we have an active list of 70 students that were being managed using a national best practice scale to evaluate the student's evaluation rubric score to determine the level of service need. UTM has a good retention rate with the students being served.

Student follow-up varies from case-to-case, but typically includes contacting professors and sending check-in emails to students. Carly Jo Archer's internship role as case manager allows her to connect students with campus services, such as connecting a student with food insecurities to the Captain's Pantry or Skyhawks Share meals and accommodating academic needs with tutoring services or life skills support, from utilizing a planner to calling in a prescription refill.

Top issues for Student Affairs include addressing housing repairs, restoration or replacement of the university pool, expanding facility space for student health and counseling center services, and growing key staff positions (i.e.: a fulltime case manager, disability services, and counseling as well as several areas where personnel are only one person deep). Dr. Lewter affirmed that Student Affairs provides a full array of student services programming, but could enhance its programming with additional funds. Student Affairs funding represents dedicated fees for student health, travel study, and discretionary student programming, which covers SGA, campus recreation and other programming.

## **V. UT Promise Application Update**

Chancellor Carver invited Director of Admissions Destin Tucker to update the Advisory Board on UT's media splash with the launch of the UT Promise initiative set for fall 2020. Ms. Tucker explained that the Tennessee Promise is a last dollar scholarship. To take advantage of this program, Ms. Tucker clarified that some of this year's deadlines have passed, including a November 1 filing requirement for the state-wide Tennessee Promise scholarship application, and a separate December 15 timeline for completing the UT Promise scholarship program application with designation for UT campus preference. The final criterion requires interested students to file their FAFSA application by February 1.

This recently established undergraduate program is similarly aligned with the Tennessee Promise scholarship and guarantees free tuition and fees for qualifying Tennessee residents attending UT campuses for up to five years. UT Promise recipients are required to have a Volunteer Mentor and perform eight hours of community service annually. To qualify, a student's family income and assets must be below \$50,000, the student must be eligible for the Tennessee Hope Lottery Scholarship (with a 3.0 high school GPA or 21 ACT score), then maintain college continuation requirements. Ms. Tucker presented a two budget scenarios created as examples to clarify that the UT Promise pays for tuition expenses but does not cover room and board expenses, course fees, books, or other educational expenses. However, a student may become eligible for UT Promise funds after some college scholarships culminate after one or two years. To emphasize this point, Ms. Tucker shared preliminary eligibility numbers, which indicate that 51 incoming students appear eligible for the UT Promise; however, based on the last dollar criterion, none of these incoming students will receive any UT Promise funding in the fall. On a positive note, UTM has ramped up communications with 198 currently enrolled students to notify those students they appear to meet the UT Promise criteria and encourage them to complete a FAFSA before the February 1 deadline. Preliminary estimates indicate those 198 UTM students would receive an average award of \$2,734 per student, totaling \$541,343.

The UT Promise should allow UTM to attract students who only heard the free community college message and might have felt that they could not afford a four-year degree. Marketing this opportunity may bring some students back to the table. For more information, she directs individuals to visit: [utpromise.tennessee.edu](http://utpromise.tennessee.edu).

## **VI. Course Transfers Across UT Campuses**

Provost Philip Acree Cavalier presented a brief update on the UT System's work related to UT's course transfer initiative. He described that Dr. Linda Martin, UT Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Success, organized a System workshop for CAOs and CSAOs to study obstacles that impede

transferring courses across the System. The team quickly discovered that the appropriate data needed to explore why students struggle to transfer across the System was not available. In order to supply the necessary data, surveys were initiated to compile and assess student feedback and better understand faculty/staff concerns. Approximately 95 students transferred between UT campuses during 2018-19.

Early feedback indicates that UT students appear satisfied with and feel welcomed by their new campus but that satisfaction does not extend to the UT institution from which they have departed. At this point, the data is unclear regarding whether the dissatisfaction with the former institution caused the student to leave or if the dissatisfaction comes from the departure experience. Perhaps, more interesting is that 76 faculty and staff respondents identified questions of financial aid continuation and concerns over what credits will transfer as primary challenges. A common general education core across the System might be best viewed as a long-term goal after UTK just implemented a new core for their campus. A couple of concrete suggestions requested by students included a central landing page for all transfer information and to explore a common UT transcript. The Provost predicted that it might be possible to work out the credit transfers for many academic fields but that a few programs might prove to be more complicated. He concluded his remarks by reiterating the importance of determining and understanding why students transfer to UTM and why students leave UTM to attend UTC or UTK. Articulation agreements between UTM and individual institutions allow transfers to be more seamless.

## **VII. Closing Remarks**

Chair Sparks called on Chancellor Carver for closing comments and announcements. Chancellor Carver announced that UTM kicked-off a search for the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement position. Jeanna Curtis Swafford has done an admirable job in filling the interim role. Dean Shadow Robinson chair of the search committee, reported that he anticipates scheduling airport interviews by mid-January, followed by campus interviews in February.

With ~7,700 applications and 4,800 admits, UTM's fall 2020 enrollment is relatively flat compared to fall 2019. The campus will continue with a big recruiting push these next few months not only looking to fall 2021 but also focusing on fall 2020.

The State of Tennessee Comptroller's Office recently performed a scheduled Sunset Audit on The University of Tennessee. The Comptroller's Report presented on December 18, 2019, resulted in a good process for our campus with a good result. An important focus that came out of the audit for UTM was a closer review our Clery procedures and reporting. The campus has spent the past four months with a team from Residence Life, Public Safety, Title IX, Student Affairs, and Student Conduct examining how we report crime. The Chancellor offered to provide a more in-depth conversation regarding Clery reporting to coincide with the Advisory Board annual Clery/Title IX training.

Looking ahead, the campus will open bids for the Latimer Engineering and Science Building on January 29, 2020. This construction project represents the first new academic building on the Martin campus in over 40 years.

Another important capital project involves damage from seismic activity to the Hardy Graham Stadium, which occurred on April 30, 2019. The seismic event weakened the infrastructure of the bleachers on the east side of the stadium. Chancellor Carver reported that the campus just received information on the insurance claim and clearance from the State Building Commission to begin restoration. The probable go forward plan will result in a new look for the visitor seating area to include fewer seats and a design that is both lower and wider than the current structure. The football facility should be available by fall 2020.

Additionally, the campus is hopeful that it will receive funding for the demolition of Grove Apartments in this budget cycle as a capital maintenance project. Chancellor Carver stated that the campus has been working with the State to address this request, based on safety issues. THEC is aware of this request but does not fund demolition projects. Once demolition is completed, the site could become a green space for recreation, tailgating, and student gatherings, and perhaps accommodate a small staging area to facilitate outdoor concerts.

On April 13, 2020, the campus will host Ms. Cyntoia Brown-Long as a guest speaker to share her story as a victim of sex-trafficking. Ms. Brown was convicted of murder and serving a life sentence on death row when Governor Bill Haslam delivered her pardon. The itinerary for the full-day event includes a book signing, afternoon session with students to delve into issues surrounding the juvenile justice system, and a public event that evening. Ms. Brown will be joined by her defense team of Charles Bone and UTM alumnus Houston Gordon.

Plans are underway for UTM to host its second annual Skyhawk Retention Summit on May 13, 2020. The event, coordinated by Provost Cavalier's office, is again expected to bring together representatives from community colleges and universities from eight surrounding states. Conversations about retention and student success with a nationally-known speaker will focus on how we can bring students from entrance to graduation. The charge is \$50.

UTM's NRMI Leadership program, joined by UTC colleagues, are working together to bridge student services projects by participating in an Alternative Spring Break. Students from both institutions will join forces to tackle urban community service projects in Chattanooga in 2020 and again in 2021 to address rural poverty issues in West Tennessee.

Chancellor Carver reported that he serves on the UT Commission of Agriculture, which has brought together several agricultural industry leaders from almost every sector of agriculture across the state and the Grand Divisions. The first meeting was quite successful at looking at what our strengths are and what we could be. One of the big take-away challenges relates to how to do a better job of getting young people engaged in agriculture and to truly understand what a career/lifestyle in agriculture looks like. Advisory Board members acknowledged their support of the state spending more funds on research facilities, whether swine, poultry or dairy cattle, and Chancellor Carver to advocate for the produce industry, especially related to job opportunities taking fresh produce to market production.

Chair Sparks encouraged his fellow Advisory Board members to talk-up UT Martin. UTM is a good institution and the region is fortunate to have this institution and its leadership.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Board is May 8, 2020.

### **VIII. Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Hal Bynum and seconded by Katie Ashley. The meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Edie Gibson, Secretary