

**The University of West Alabama
Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Bell Conference Center
Livingston, Alabama
March 6, 2023 - 10:30 a.m.**

I. Call to Order

Mr. Hal Bloom called the meeting to order and requested Ms. Terry to call the roll.

II. Roll Call

Board members attending were: Ms. Jean Anderson, Ms. Jody W. Beard, Mr. Hal Bloom, Ms. Sheila Cloud, Mr. Jerry Groce, Mr. Randy Hillman, Dr. John Killian, Mr. Jerry F. Smith, and Mr. Victor Vernon. Ms. Terry announced that a quorum was present. Also attending were: Mr. Mike Kendrick, University Attorney; Dr. Ken Tucker, University President; and Ms. Toni Terry, Assistant Secretary to the Board, recording minutes.

Mr. Bloom asked Dr. John Killian to open the meeting with a prayer.

III. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Jean Anderson moved to approve the agenda; Ms. Sheila Cloud seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.

IV. Approval of Minutes from December 12, 2022

Mr. Bloom asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2022 meeting. *Ms. Jody W. Beard made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 12, 2022 meeting; Ms. Jean Anderson seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.*

V. Report from the Academic Affairs Committee

Mr. Jerry Groce advised that Dr. Tim Edwards provided a report on recent decanal appointments (College of Business and College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics) and search (College of Liberal Arts). Dr. Edwards also reported on recent actions from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, progress relating to reaffirmation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, new academic programs, contracts and grants, promotion and tenure, and recruiting efforts.

VI. Report from the Student Affairs Committee

Ms. Jean Anderson advised that Dr. Melissa Haab provided a report on admission updates and comparisons, including data on enrollment, applications, tours, and scholarships. Dr. Haab also reported on the accomplishments of the Enrollment Management Committee (and six additional sub-committees) thus far and future goals relating to enrollment management. Research focusing on potential barriers to student enrollment, retention, and success is ongoing.

VII. Report from the Facilities Committee

Mr. Bloom advised that Mr. Chris Egbert provided a report regarding university facilities and four current projects: Tiger Stadium, track facility and soccer field, Foust Hall, and the amphitheater. Mr. Bloom noted that the renovations and expansions around campus would further aid recruitment, enrollment, and retention efforts, particularly highlighting the projected impact of the track facility and soccer field, and amphitheater.

VIII. Report from the Finance Committee

Ms. Sheila Cloud advised that Mr. Clete Beard provided a report regarding the quarter-end financial summary comparing December 31, 2019, through December 31, 2022, reflecting an overall surplus of \$19,388,879. Ms. Cloud expressed appreciation to everyone involved with the progress made to date and for the continued diligence in this area. Mr. Beard also reported on the annual budget process for Fiscal Year 2024 and provided a status update regarding the Twin Oaks property.

IX. Report from the University President

Wiley University Services (Wiley) Proposal/Renewal Agreement

Dr. Ken Tucker advised that the current contract with Wiley regarding online programs would expire in September 2023. This partnership and collaboration have been successful, and the proposal is under review. Contract negotiations are expected to conclude in the next several weeks for consideration by the board at the next quarterly meeting in June 2023.

Legislative Session/Budget

Dr. Tucker reported that the legislative session would begin on March 7, 2023, and should move quickly into executive session to determine how to best utilize the significant amount of American Rescue Plan Act funds. Regarding the education budgets, funding requests have been made for the Black Belt STEM Education Institute, Black Belt Teacher Corps Teach for Alabama, and Center for Rural Workforce Development; a new line item request was added for the Cahaba Biodiversity Center. If considered, supplemental budget requests were also submitted for expanding the nursing program, adding a new respiratory therapy program, and other academic and student recreation initiatives.

Washington, D.C. Trip

Dr. Tucker indicated that he would be traveling to Washington, D.C., on March 21-23, 2023, for meetings with Congressman Robert Aderholt, Congresswoman Terri Sewell, Senator Katie Britt, and Senator Tommy Tuberville.

Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area

Dr. Tucker conveyed that as of January 5, 2023, the designation became official for the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area. The designation is a significant achievement for the Black Belt and the UWA team, led by Vice President of Economic and Workforce Development and Assistant Provost Tina Jones, that have worked diligently on this project for many years. The appointment should bring national attention and government funding for tourism and historic preservation to the Black Belt, with UWA serving as the lead agency.

West Alabama Young Leaders Award

Dr. Tucker shared that Executive Assistant to the President and University Charter School (UCS) Head of School JJ Wedgworth was a 2022-2023 West Alabama Young Leaders Awards honoree through the United Way of West Alabama. Dr. Wedgworth was recognized at a luncheon in Tuscaloosa on February 27, 2023. Dr. Tucker expressed how valuable Dr. Wedgworth was to UWA, UCS, and the larger community.

Alabama Women's Hall of Fame

Dr. Tucker advised that the Alabama Women's Hall of Fame induction ceremony and luncheon were held on March 2, 2023, honoring the newest inductees: Ms. Mahala Dickerson and Ms. Alice Lee.

Spring Session One-2023 Update

Dr. Tucker reported that online enrollment for Spring Session One-2023 was record-setting at 4,233; this was 251 more students than Spring Session One-2022. Dr. Tucker especially thanked Dean of the College of Education and Online Programs Jan Miller, Quality Assurance Director Kristen Woodruff, and their team.

OnlineMastersDegrees.org (OMD) National Rankings

Dr. Tucker announced that the University of West Alabama had been ranked third in the nation for the Best Online Master's Degrees in Secondary Education from OMD for the master of education in secondary education. The University of Alabama and Auburn University had programs ranked 23rd and 28th, respectively.

UWA Men's Basketball

Dr. Tucker shared that the men's basketball team were Gulf South Conference Champions, secured with a 67-65 victory over the University of West Georgia on March 5, 2023; this is the first tournament title for men's basketball since 1982. Dr. Tucker expressed pride in Head Coach Nick Woodruff, Assistant Coach Jake Jobling, and the entire men's team. As the number two seed, the team will play Tuskegee University at the 2023 National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II Men's Basketball South Region Championship on March 11, 2023, at Nova Southeastern University in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Resolution in Honor of Mr. Thed Spree

Dr. Tucker welcomed the Spree family and conveyed condolences on behalf of the University regarding the passing of Trustee Robert Thetford ("Thed") Spree. Dr. Tucker shared that Mr. Spree was a two-time graduate of UWA and was widely known and appreciated, statewide and beyond, as a successful entrepreneur in various industries, including catfish farming, cattle, and timber. Mr. Spree's distinguished tenure on the UWA Board of Trustees began in 1988; Mr. Spree continued to serve on the board until his passing in December 2022, making him the longest-serving board member in the University's history. Mr. Spree's passion for and benevolence toward UWA was invaluable. Dr. Tucker expressed his delight when

the board decided to rename the rodeo complex the Hines-Spree Rodeo Complex in 2019 to honor Mr. Spree's tireless support and advocacy on behalf of UWA and its student-athletes.

Mr. Bloom shared that Mr. Spree was a person that could always be trusted to do the right thing for the betterment of the University. Mr. Bloom commended Mr. Spree's widow, Ms. Julia ("Judy") Burke Spree, for such a successful marriage partnership and lovely family.

The resolution below was presented to the board:

WHEREAS, Robert Thetford ("Thed") Spree earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University in 1969 and received a Master's Degree in Counseling from the University in 1970; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Spree was appointed to serve as a member of the Board of Trustees of the University in 1988, and he continued to serve in such capacity until his death on December 11, 2022; and

WHEREAS, during his long and distinguished service as a member of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Spree served on virtually every Committee of the Board and, most recently, served as a member of the Academic Affairs Committee and Athletic Committee; and

WHEREAS, during Mr. Spree's outstanding career as a member of the Board of Trustees, he provided invaluable services to the University and was passionately involved in numerous activities and accomplishments of the University, which included, but was not limited to, his ardent support for the athletic programs of the University and the construction and completion of the rodeo complex in 1996, which complex was previously named by the Board of Trustees as the Hines-Spree Rodeo Complex; and

WHEREAS, in addition to Mr. Spree's service as a member of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Spree had a distinguished career as a catfish, cattle, and timber producer and received numerous national and state honors; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Board of Trustees to honor Mr. Spree's long and dedicated service to the University and to the State of Alabama.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the University of West Alabama Board of Trustees, at a regular meeting duly called on March 6, 2023, a quorum being present, as follows:

1. That the Board of Trustees of the University of West Alabama, by the adoption of this Resolution, does express their sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Thed Spree upon his passing on December 11, 2022, and does express their gratitude to Mr. Spree and his family for Mr. Spree's outstanding association with and dedicated and exemplary service to the University of West Alabama, as a student, a lifelong resident of the Black Belt, a successful and distinguished businessman, and as the longest serving member of the Board of Trustees.

2. That the Board of Trustees does direct that a copy of this Resolution, after its adoption, be distributed to Mr. Spree's wife, Judy Spree, and to his family and to such other persons or organizations as deemed appropriate by the President of the University.

3. That this Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption by the Board of Trustees of the University of West Alabama.

A motion was made by Ms. Jean Anderson and seconded by Mr. Jerry Groce to approve the resolution honoring Mr. Thed Spree. The motion carried.

X. Report from the Board President

Report from the Presidential Evaluation Committee

The university president's performance is evaluated annually per the bylaws of the UWA Board of Trustees. Mr. Bloom requested that Mr. Groce, as committee chair, present the evaluation regarding President Tucker. On behalf of the committee, Mr. Groce thanked Mr. Bloom for the opportunity to serve on the committee. Deans Council, Faculty Senate, President's Council, the UWA Board of Trustees, the UWA Foundation Board, and the University Charter School Board of Directors were polled for the evaluation. Participants were asked to complete a questionnaire that covered multiple areas and provide feedback and comments regarding the president's performance throughout 2022. Of the 74 persons polled, 35 responses were returned, the majority reflecting an excellent or above-average rating (strategy and priorities-86%, fundraising-85%, financial management-94%, relationships and constituencies-84%, organization and team-86%, leadership-88%, and future considerations-93%). The committee felt that the results and feedback from the evaluation process validated and confirmed the board's opinion regarding Dr. Tucker's performance, noting that his esteemed leadership was highly regarded and valued.

Dr. Tucker expressed his appreciation to the board for their support and positive working relationship. He added that the credit for any successes should be shared among his team for the great work at UWA.

Mr. Bloom recognized the overall outstanding evaluation of Dr. Tucker's performance and especially thanked him for his hard work and the exceptional leadership team he has assembled.

XI. New Business

There was no new business.

XII. Other Business

There was no other business.

XIII. Adjourn

Mr. Bloom asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. *Ms. Jody W. Beard moved to adjourn; Ms. Jean Anderson seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.* The meeting adjourned at 11:13 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Toni Terry