**The University of West Alabama**

**Board of Trustees Regular Meeting**

**Bell Conference Center**

**Livingston, Alabama**

**June 6, 2022 - 10:30 a.m.**

1. **Call to Order**

Mr. Justin Smith asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting of March 7, 2022. ***Mr. Victor Vernon***

***so moved; Mrs. Jean Anderson seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.*** Mr. Smith called the June 6, 2022 meeting to order and requested Ms. Terry to call the roll.

1. **Roll Call**

Board members attending were: Mrs. Jean Anderson, Mrs. Jody W. Beard, Mr. Joseph Brown, Mr.

Hal Bloom, Mrs. Sheila Cloud, Mr. Jerry Groce, Mr. Randy Hillman, Dr. John Killian, Mr. Justin Smith, Mr. Thed Spree, 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. Smith asked Dr. John Killian to open the meeting with a prayer.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

***Mrs. Jean Anderson moved to approve the agenda; Mr. Thed Spree seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.***

**IV. Approval of Minutes from March 7, 2022**

Mr. Justin Smith asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 7, 2022 meeting. Mrs. Jody W. Beard noted a correction needed to the minutes, correcting the date in the first sentence from December 13, 2022, to December 13, 2021. ***Mr. Jerry Groce made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected; Mrs. Jody W. Beard seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.***

**V. Report from the Athletic Committee**

Mr. Hal Bloom reported that Mr. Kent Partridge shared several exciting updates regarding sports and academics during the Athletic Committee meeting. Highlights included the undefeated women’s tennis team winning the Gulf South Conference (GSC) Tournament for the second year in a row, with Coach Jeff Beaman awarded Coach of the Year. The men’s basketball team was GSC Regular Season Champions, with Coach Nick Woodruff awarded Coach of the Year. UWA Rodeo performed well in the Ozark Region, with the women’s team qualifying to compete in the College National Finals Rodeo. During the 2021-2022 academic year, there were 215 student-athletes that could boast a minimum grade point average of 3.00 and 118 graduates.

**VI. Report from the Institutional Advancement Committee**

Mr. Randy Hillman conveyed that Dr. Chris Thomason and his team in institutional advancement are doing an outstanding job. The Institutional Advancement Committee meeting included updates regarding increased donations and pledges, alumni events and goals, and compelling new marketing avenues through social media. Mr. Hillman expressed his appreciation to the team for their efforts and congratulated them on their successes thus far.

**VII. Report from the Facilities Committee**

Mr. Joseph Brown indicated that Mr. Bobby Truelove provided a comprehensive report during the Facilities Committee meeting. Updates included the Tiger Stadium expansion, Chapel Complex, Pruitt Hall expansion, Foust Hall building renovation, Brock Hall renovation, Track Facility and Soccer Field, fiber optic, and roof replacements. The Alabama Public School and College Authority projects will be reviewed due to the drastic increases in material costs and gasoline, supply-chain issues, and labor shortages. Still, Mr. Truelove and his team are doing a fantastic job.

**VIII. Report from the Finance Committee**

Mrs. Sheila Cloud shared that Mr. Clete Beard provided an excellent quarterly financial report comparing March 31, 2018, through March 31, 2022, and the fiscal year budget for 2022/2023. The Finance Committee approved the budget with proposed total revenue of $89,076,197; proposed total expenses of $88,676,654; and revenue over expenses of $399,543. The conservative budget presented

included merit raises for all full-time employees and no increase in tuition for students. Mr. Justin Smith requested a vote by the Board regarding the budget approved by the Finance Committee. ***The motion carried, and the budget was approved as presented.*** Mrs. Cloud advised that the bond rating for the University had been upgraded from Baa1 to A3, stable. Additionally, the financial audit for fiscal year 2021 resulted in no findings. Mrs. Cloud praised all who contributed to the achievements in this area.

**IX. Report from the University President**

*Education Trust Fund*

Dr. Ken Tucker indicated that the University received an 18.7% increase, from $21.6 million to $25.6 million, in the operation and maintenance budget from the Education Trust Fund, leading the other universities in the state, with only two other schools reaching double-digit percentage increases. An additional $450,000 was received in the supplemental budget to build an amphitheater, which will be located between the lower end of Wallace Hall and the Campbell House. Line items included $10,000 for the Alabama Women’s Hall of Fame; $400,000 for a Rural Workforce Development Center; $610,000 for the Black Belt Teacher Corps, an increase from $450,000; $550,000 for the Black Belt STEM Education Institute; $245,834 for the UA/UWA Regional Inservice Center, an increase from $200,000; and $1,862,187 for the advancement and technology fund. Dr. Tucker especially thanked State Finance Director Bill Poole and Government and Community Affairs Director Tom Tartt for their support and dedicated work.

*Governor’s Seal of Excellence in Work-Based Learning*

Dr. Tucker was pleased to report that UWA was one of only four organizations statewide to be awarded the Governor’s Seal of Excellence in Work-Based Learning for the integrated marketing communications program. Governor Kay Ivey presented the award at the inaugural Work-Based Learning Summit in Birmingham, Alabama, in April 2022. Dr. Tucker commended Communications Chair Amy Jones and her team for this special recognition.

*Spring Commencement*

Dr. Tucker shared that there was a total of 741 graduates (251 undergraduates and 490 graduates) for Spring 2022. The Commencement ceremony was held on May 7, 2022, with 405 students that confirmed ceremony participation. There were 72 individuals that graduated with honors and 10 with a 4.00 grade point average that received the Ralph M. Lyon Award. Special recognitions included: Dr. Brian Keener, Loraine McIIwain Bell Trustee Professor; Dr. Veronica Triplett, Nellie Rose McCrory Service Excellence Award; Dr. LaJuan Hutchinson, William E. Gilbert Award for Outstanding Teaching; Mr. Lawson Edmonds, Vice President Emeritus; Dr. Erica King, Professor Emeritus; Dr. John McCall, Professor Emeritus, Dr. Ginger Eastman, Society of the Golden Key; Mr. John Poole, Society of the Golden Key; and Mr. Bill Poole, Honorary Doctorate.

*Graduation Rates*

Dr. Tucker advised that the graduation rate data is based on six-year cohorts, with the most recent graduation cohort entering during the 2015-2016 academic year. The most recent data reflects a 40% graduation rate for all students for the second year in a row. However, the rate for all students only five years ago was 28%. Dr. Tucker thanked the faculty, staff, and advisors for contributing to this accomplishment. An even more noteworthy improvement is that the student-athlete population, whose graduation rate was only 34% five years ago, has increased to 82%. Dr. Tucker conveyed his pride in Academic Advisor Mike Jones, the coaches, and the athletic staff for their efforts with the student-athletes that resulted in such an incredible improvement in graduation rates.

*Division of Economic and Workforce Development Update*

Dr. Tucker welcomed and introduced Vice President of the Division of Economic and Workforce Development Tina Jones to provide an update regarding the Division to the Board of Trustees.

Dr. Jones reported that since 2018, the Division had secured more than $6 million in funds for the University, which translates to one-third of total grant funding for UWA. Staff in the Division have played significant roles as project directors or key personnel in more than 20 funded projects, focusing on enhancing economic and workforce development in Sumter County and the region.

Dr. Jones shared that Enviva, the largest wood pellet producer in the United States, plans to invest approximately $185 million in the Port of Epes Industrial Park for a new production facility. Ground construction is slated to begin by the end of June 2022. It is anticipated that Enviva will employ a minimum of 95 employees, which translates to more than $4 million in new payroll.

The Region 3 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Board funded UWA’s WIOA Youth Career Pathways program for the seventh year (fiscal year 2022), awarding $245,000 to serve 45 participants in Greene, Marengo, and Sumter counties. The final cohort from fiscal year 2021 will graduate in June 2022 with numerous certifications and career readiness tools. UWA’s certified nursing assistant certificate of completion is a credential accredited by the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Dr. Jones spoke regarding the Leveraging Integrated Networks for Change and Sustainability (LINCS) project, a $2.5 million grant funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Delta Regional Authority. LINCS aims to strengthen the economy and population in West Alabama by developing a rural regional workforce based on industry-driven credentials and skill-sets within a 10-county service area. The Skills on Wheels units offer flexible, mobile training for businesses and serve area schools with onsite field trips for students.

The Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area congressional designation continues to gain momentum, and there is active legislation in the House and Senate. Additionally, the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area has been added to an omnibus bill regarding National Heritage Area funding. The National Heritage Area designation is important as it empowers communities to tell their stories, fosters an improved quality of life, and increases grant funding opportunities, new partnerships, and resources. The Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area is the only National Heritage Area in Alabama at this time.

The Sucarnochee Folklife Festival is scheduled for July 16, 2022. This festival has been in existence since 2005 through funding provided by the Alabama State Council on the Arts.

Dr. Tucker shared that UWA has an excellent reputation statewide in economic and workforce development, which is a testimony to the exceptional work of Dr. Jones and her team.

*Resolution of Gratitude-Outgoing Board President Justin Smith*

Dr. Tucker sincerely thanked Board President Justin Smith for leading the Board of Trustees over the last three years. During his tenure as president, Mr. Smith devoted countless hours preparing for board meetings and communicating with Trustees to ensure that all members stayed informed. Dr. Tucker conveyed that serving with Mr. Smith had been a pleasure, as he is highly efficient, effective, and professional. Dr. Tucker added that Mr. Smith loves UWA and the surrounding area. Dr. Tucker requested authorization to work with Mr. Mike Kendrick to develop a resolution of gratitude and appreciation for Mr. Smith’s work. ***Dr. John Killian made a motion for the resolution to be developed; Mrs. Sheila Cloud seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.***

Mr. Smith thanked Dr. Tucker for his kind words, adding that serving in the role had been an honor and a privilege. Mr. Smith was complimentary of Dr. Tucker and the University’s administration for their availability, helpfulness, and responsiveness.

**X. Report from the Board President**

*Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation Report and Resolution*

Mr. Justin Smith advised that the accreditation principles of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges now require that the governing bodies of accredited institutions periodically and regularly define and evaluate their responsibilities and expectations. For 2022, Trustees were asked to complete a survey questionnaire and provide feedback through additional questions. Of the 12 Trustees, 10 responses were returned, with the majority reflecting agreement or strong agreement regarding the statements in the survey. The feedback received through the evaluation process indicated that more continual training of the Board might be needed in the future, especially if there are changes with ethics laws, etc. Mr. Smith thanked the Board for their participation and reiterated the value of self-examination. Mr. Smith presented the following Resolution regarding the Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation:

WHEREAS, the Board of Trustees of the University of West Alabama ("the Board") has been informed that Section 4.2.g of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges ("SACSCOC") accreditation principles requires that governing bodies of accredited institutions periodically and regularly define and evaluate their responsibilities and expectations ("Board Self-Evaluation"); and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined it would be in the University's best interest to require that the Board define and self-evaluate its responsibilities and expectations on an at least biennial basis; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined it would be in the University's best interest to require each member of the Board to complete the University of West Alabama Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation Survey, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit A.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the University of West Alabama Board of Trustees, at a regular meeting, duly held on June 6, 2022, a quorum being present, as follows:

* + - 1. That the Board does by the adoption of this Resolution determine that the Board shall conduct a self-evaluation in order to evaluate its responsibilities and expectations at least every two (2) years.
      2. That the Board does by the adoption of this Resolution direct that the President of the University forward to the members of the Board of Trustees of the University of West Alabama, the University of West Alabama Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation Survey, a copy of which is attached hereto, and does direct that each member of the Board of Trustees shall complete such Survey and return the same to the President within thirty (30) days of receipt of such Survey to ensure that the Board regularly evaluates its responsibilities and expectations as required by Rule 4.2.g of the SACSCOC accreditation principles.
      3. That this Resolution shall become effective immediately by its adoption by the Board of Trustees of the University of West Alabama.

***A motion was made by Mrs. Jean Anderson and seconded by Mr. Hal Bloom to approve the Resolution as presented; the motion carried.***

*Board Meeting Schedule*

Mr. Justin Smith presented the tentative board meeting schedule for September 12, 2022, through June 5, 2023. ***A motion was made by Mr. Randy Hillman and seconded by Mrs. Jean Anderson to approve the schedule as presented; the motion carried.***

*Report from the Nominating Committee*

The terms of the current board officers and Executive Committee expire June 2022 (three-year terms). Mr. Justin Smith asked Committee Chair Joseph Brown to present the report from the Nominating Committee. Mr. Brown shared that the Committee had met twice, and the conversations were collaborative, fluid, and productive. Mr. Brown thanked Mrs. Jody W. Beard and Mr. Jerry Groce for their time and service on the Committee. The following nominations were submitted: president pro tempore, Mr. Hal Bloom; vice president, Mr. Joseph Brown; secretary, Mrs. Jody W. Beard; and treasurer, Mrs. Sheila Cloud. ***A motion was made by Dr. John Killian and seconded by Mrs. Jean Anderson to approve the nominations as presented; the motion carried.***

Mr. Smith thanked the Committee for their work and congratulated the new officers, expressing excitement about the progress being made at UWA and the leadership moving forward.

Mr. Brown conveyed his appreciation to Mr. Smith for his service and leadership and requested that a committee be formed to review succession planning for board officers. Mr. Smith appointed a Succession Planning Review Committee to be chaired by Mr. Brown. Mrs. Beard and Mr. Groce were appointed to serve on the Committee. Mr. Smith encouraged the Committee to work in conjunction with Mr. Mike Kendrick.

**XI. New Business**

There was no new business.

**XII. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**XIII. Adjourn**

Mr. Justin Smith asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. ***Mrs. Jody W. Beard moved to adjourn; Mr. Thed Spree seconded the motion, and the motion was approved.*** The meeting adjourned at 11:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Toni Terry*