

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Regular Meeting  
The University of West Alabama  
Bell Conference Center  
March 2, 2020 10:30 a.m.**

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Justin Smith, President *Pro Tempore*, called the meeting to order.

**II. Roll Call**

Mr. Justin Smith asked Mrs. Beard to call the roll. Other than Mr. Justin Smith, members attending were: Mrs. Jean Anderson, Mr. Hal Bloom, Mrs. Sheila Cloud, Mr. Jerry Groce, Mr. Randy Hillman, Dr. John Killian, Mr. Jerry Smith, Mr. Thed Spree, and Mr. Victor Vernon. Mrs. Beard announced there was a quorum present. Also attending were: Mr. Mike Kendrick (University Attorney), President Ken Tucker, and several other administrators and staff members, with Katie Beard recording the minutes. Mr. Justin Smith asked Dr. John Killian to open the meeting with a prayer.

**III. Approval of Agenda**

*Mrs. Sheila Cloud moved to approve the Agenda; Dr. John Killian seconded the motion; and the motion was approved.*

**IV. Approval of Minutes from December 2, 2019**

Mr. Justin Smith asked if there were any changes to the minutes from the meetings held on December 2, 2019. There were none. *Mr. Victor Vernon made a motion to approve the minutes; Mr. Jerry Smith seconded the motion; and the motion was approved.*

Mr. Justin Smith asked for a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation. *Dr. John Killian made a motion to go into Executive Session for this purpose; Mr. Victor Vernon seconded the motion; and the motion passed to go into Executive Session at 10:42 a.m.* The estimated time for Executive Session is ten minutes.

\*\*\*\*\*

*At 10:47 a.m., Mr. Jerry Smith made a motion to reconvene the regular Board of Trustees meeting; Mrs. Sheila Cloud seconded the motion, and it was approved.*

Mr. Justin Smith recognized Mr. Thed Spree and the name change of the rodeo complex which was recently approved by the Board. The rodeo complex is now named in honor of Mr. Thed Spree and has been updated to the Hines/Spree Rodeo Complex. This honor was given to Mr. Spree for all of his hard work in helping the rodeo program. Mr. Spree stated that he was honored and proud and added that it has been a long road to get the rodeo program where it is today.

**V. Report from the Student Affairs Committee**

Mr. Justin Smith, who was serving as chair in Mr. Terry Bunn’s absence, reported Mr. Richard Hester provided an update on the status of the new initiatives that were put into place in September. Mr. Smith added that the progress is strong and the numbers are positive.

**VI. Report from the Academic Affairs Committee**

Mr. Jerry Groce reported that Tim Edwards updated the Committee with the latest online enrollment numbers which show a positive trend in growth for online. Dr. Edwards presented the new academic programs that were approved from 2018-2020. He also highlighted Institutional Effectiveness and Retention and announced that UWA has received \$5.3 million in grants and contracts from 2019-2020. Dr. Edwards stated that six faculty members have been promoted and three have been tenured.

**VII. Report from the Facilities Committee**

Mr. Justin Smith, who was serving as chair in Mr. Joseph Brown’s absence, provided an overview of the report of the Facilities Committee. The McConnell House renovation has been completed by the physical plant who did a remarkable job. Bids that were received for the perma-plank seating and the replacement of the new turf at Tiger Stadium. The perma-plank seating at Tiger Stadium bid came in at \$79,900. *Mr. Justin Smith asked for any discussion on the perma plank bid and there was none. A vote was held and the perma plank bid was approved unanimously.* The new turf for Tiger Stadium bid came in at \$358,350. *Mr. Justin Smith asked for any discussion on the turf replacement at Tiger Stadium and there was none. A vote was held and the bid for the new turf at Tiger Stadium was approved unanimously.* An overview of the proposed new

renovations for Tiger Stadium was given and the proposed budget for this project will be presented at the December board meeting for the Board's consideration.

#### **VIII. Report from the Finance Committee**

Mrs. Sheila Cloud reported that a very encouraging report was given by Mr. Lawson Edmonds. UWA's financial position has improved consistently and steadily since Dr. Tucker put in place the financial sustainability plan. A quarterly report and a financial summary report was given. The Moody's credit opinion report was given which showed that UWA has received a Baa1 stable bond rating. Also, Mr. Mike Dunn with Stifel presented the bond refinancing timeline and stated that UWA has saved \$2.5 million dollars which will be received as cash at closing to use for capital improvements.

#### **IX. Report from the University President**

##### Moody's Report

Dr. Tucker stated that the bond refinancing with Stifel went exceptionally well. Mr. Mike Dunn, Stifel, did a great job and because of market conditions and an improved bond rating from Moody's was able to secure \$2.5 million in savings for UWA. The \$2.5 million will be issued to UWA as cash upon closing to use for capital improvements. The Moody's rating for UWA is now listed as Baa1 stable. Moody's listed consecutive years of large enrollment growth with online and improved operating performance and cash flow as reasons to improve the bond rating. They did express some concern with UWA's potential market volatility with online programs and the State of Alabama's Retirement System requiring the institution to list the State's portion of the retirement financial obligation on our financials.

##### National Heritage Area

Dr. Tucker reported that Sumter County had recently applied to become designated as an Alabama Black Belt Heritage Area. This was a movement sponsored by Senator Richard Shelby and Senator Doug Jones and co-sponsored by Representatives Terri Sewell and Robert Aderholdt. This designation is designed to bring economic development to 19 counties in the Black Belt region by partnering with local communities, state agencies, and non-profit organizations to shape a sustainable future for the Black Belt region through the preservation, interpretation, and marketing of unique cultural, historical, and natural assets, and to create a better quality of life for its residents through education and development of community capacity and pride. The Alabama Black Belt Heritage Area is administered by The Center for the Study of the Black Belt at UWA under Dr. Tina Jones direction. Dr. Tina Jones stated that the application is in process and being designated as the Alabama Black Belt Heritage Area means we could receive up to \$1 million annually and get the opportunity to apply for new grants. The State of Alabama currently has one Heritage Area located in Muscle Shoals. Mr. Victor Vernon asked if there was any opposition to Sumter County receiving this and Dr. Jones stated there was not.

##### ADECA

Dr. Tucker announced that UWA had received the Alabama Inland Port Grant which will be used to dredge Port Epes. Mrs. Allison Brantley was the chief grant writer and receiving this grant will help with Enviva coming to Sumter County. This grant will serve as one part of another larger \$1.25 million grant.

##### Alabama Summit on Rural Entrepreneurship

Dr. Tucker announced that the Alabama Summit on Rural Entrepreneurship will be held at the Bell Conference Center on April 17<sup>th</sup>. The event will feature an exceptional slate of successful entrepreneurs, business leaders, and experienced economic leaders who bring unique perspectives to address rural opportunities for entrepreneurial development in Alabama's rural communities. The purpose of the Summit is to provide leadership, innovation, and creative solutions for Alabama's rural communities by building an economic infrastructure and entrepreneurial ecosystem for future prosperity. Registration is still open for this event.

Dr. Tucker stated that on December 1<sup>st</sup>, UWA hosted a Summit on Rural Workforce Development. This is the only one that exists in the state. Our presenters were of the highest quality and attendance was outstanding.

##### Men's Basketball

Dr. Tucker reported that Men's Basketball had a very successful season ending the regular season with a 21/7 record overall and 14/6 in the GSC. They are ranked as the number four seed and will host the first round of the tournament this Tuesday at 7 p.m. in Pruitt Gym matching up against number five seed, Union.

##### Super Tiger Day

Dr. Tucker stated that Super Tiger Day will be held on March 14<sup>th</sup> beginning with Preview Day on-campus. UWA is expecting over 100 students and parents for this event. Both men's baseball and women's softball will play that day. A spring football scrimmage will be held at 10 a.m. and will end the day with a fundraising draw-down at 6 p.m.

#### **X. Report from the Board President**

##### Accomplishments

Mr. Justin Smith reviewed the listing of UWA accomplishments from 2015-2019. The Board commended Dr. Tucker and his team for the efforts in furthering this university.

##### Foundation Report

Mr. Justin Smith asked Dr. John Killian to give a report of the UWA Foundation. Dr. Killian stated that he is proud of the work that the UWA Foundation is doing and stated that a copy of the Foundation Board minutes will be included in the Board

packet. He then invited Mr. Jimmy Collins, President of the UWA Foundation Board, to add any additional information. Mr. Collins read all of the resolutions of gratitude for gifts made to the Foundation.

Mr. Collins added that as a member of the Industrial Board he wanted to thank Allison Brantley, Dr. Tina Jones, and her staff for securing the ADECA grant being used to dredge Port Epes for Enviva.

Presidential Evaluation Committee

Mr. Justin Smith stated the Presidential Evaluation Committee was appointed at the last meeting as follows: Mr. Victor Vernon, chair, Mr. Hal Bloom, and Mrs. Jean Anderson. The evaluation report will be given at the June meeting. Mr. Justin Smith encouraged all Board members to complete and return the evaluation form as soon as possible.

**XI. New Business**

There was no new business.

**XII. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**XIII. Adjourn**

Mr. Justin Smith recessed the Board meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

*Katie Beard*

Assistant Secretary to the Board