

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA
FLORENCE, ALABAMA
Friday, June 14, 2024 – 9:00 a.m.

The Board of Trustees for the University of North Alabama met on Friday, June 14, 2024, in Banquet Hall C of the Guillot University Center in accordance with Section 16-51-4 of the *Code of Alabama*. A letter from three Trustees (dated May 24, 2024) was sent via email to Governor Kay Ivey in care of her Director of Constituent Affairs, requesting that the Governor call the quarterly meeting for June 14. Proposed letters calling the Board to the meeting also were sent for the Governor's signature as per standard practice, and the same were mailed from the Governor's office to Trustees in advance of the meeting.

On June 5, Board members were advised via email that the agenda, proposed resolutions, and supporting documents for items of discussion were available for individual electronic access in the Canvas software system.

Board President Pro Tempore Will Trapp called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

I. INVOCATION

At the invitation of Mr. Trapp, the opening invocation was offered by Sky Stewart, UNA alumnus and founder of Common Ground Shoals.

II. ROLL CALL

President Kenneth D. Kitts called the roll, and the following members were present in the meeting room:

Trustee Marty Abrams	Trustee Jim Page	Trustee Nancy Sanford
Trustee Joel Anderson II	Trustee Steve Pierce	Trustee Will Trapp
Trustee Kyle Buchanan	Trustee Simpson Russell	

Trustee Anne Whitaker was present via videoconference.

Trustee Wendell Gunn, Trustee Gary Smith, and ex officio member Governor Kay Ivey were absent. A quorum of voting members was in attendance.

Others present for all or part of the meeting:

- Mr. Jason Cochran, Executive Director of Governmental Relations and Economic Development
- Ms. Minnette Ellis, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
- Ms. Amber Fite-Morgan, General Counsel
- Mr. Kevin Haslam, Vice President for University Advancement
- Dr. Josh Looney, Athletics Director
- Dr. Brien Smith, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Mr. Evan Thornton, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
- Dr. K.C. White, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Dr. Vince Brewton, Dean of the Cole Honors College
- Ms. Cindy Conlon, Associate Vice President for Facilities Administration and Planning
- Ms. Michelle Eubanks, Director of University Media and Public Relations
- Mr. Brian Ford, 2023-2024 Staff Senate President
- Dr. Andrea Hunt, 2024-2025 Faculty Senate President

- Dr. Katie Kinney, Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences
- Dr. Tera Kirkman, Dean of the Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions
- Ms. Kerigan Mardis, 2024-2025 Student Government Association President
- Mr. Jeremy Martin, Director of Disability Support Services and 2024-2025 Staff Senate President
- Mr. John McGee, Executive Director of Educational Technology Services
- Dr. Amber Paulk, Deputy Provost and Board of Trustees Parliamentarian
- Ms. Regina Sherrill, Senior Assistant to the President for Administration
- Ms. Julie Taylor, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Ms. Mary Beth Willis, Instructional Designer
- Dr. Ryan Zayac, Interim Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering

Also present: *TimesDaily* reporter Bernie Delinski

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Trapp submitted the agenda for consideration. Upon motion by Mr. Russell and second by Mr. Abrams, the agenda was approved as presented by unanimous vote.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Trapp submitted the following items for consideration for collective approval:

- A. Minutes of March 15, 2024, Quarterly Board Meeting**
- B. Minutes of May 2, 2024, Board Executive Committee Meeting**
- C. Resolution of Commendation to Brian Ford, 2023-2024 Staff Senate President, University of North Alabama**
- D. Resolution of Commendation to Lauren Killen, 2023-2024 Faculty Senate President, University of North Alabama**
- E. Resolution of Commendation to Amber Sandvig, 2022-2024 Student Government Association President, University of North Alabama**

Upon motion by Mr. Buchanan and second by Mr. Anderson, the consent agenda items listed above were approved separately and severally by unanimous vote.

V. REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Kitts gave a brief summary on the state of the University from a prepared text. Topics included:

- Introduction of Dr. Smith as new Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
- UNA's position in state education budget at close of 2024 legislative session (successful Project/Progress 208 efforts to date have more than doubled our state appropriation in last 10 years from \$26 million in 2015 to \$53 million for FY 2025)
- Fall preview: enrollment outlook, launch of new academic programs, opening of new Computing and Mathematics Building
- This afternoon's groundbreaking ceremony for Bank Independent Stadium....and with no addition of a new student fee and no increase in tuition

VI. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MATTERS

Committee chair Page presented items from this committee's June 13 discussions that were on the agenda for the full Board at today's meeting:

A. Resolution Approving Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy Assistant and Master of Science in Occupational Therapy Degree Programs

Following summary comments by Mr. Page about these new workforce development programs, with the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Page and second by Mr. Buchanan, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

B. Resolution Approving the Addition of a Pre-Health Biology Option to the Bachelor of Science in Biology Degree

Following summary comments by Mr. Page, with the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Page and second by Mr. Pierce, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

C. Resolution Approving the Addition of Literary Pedagogy and Literary Research Tracks to the M.A. in English Degree Program

Following summary comments by Mr. Page, with the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Page and second by Mr. Anderson, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

D. Resolution Approving an Accelerated Master's Program (AMP) for the Master of Science in Instructional Technology and Design (ITD) Degree

Following summary comments by Mr. Page, with the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Page and second by Mr. Russell, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

E. Resolution Endorsing the University of North Alabama's Free Speech Compliance Report for Academic Year 2023-2024 Pursuant to Section 16-68-5 of the Code of Alabama

Following summary comments by Mr. Page, with the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Page and second by Ms. Sanford, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Page mentioned other academic and enrollment updates shared in the Committee meeting, including the fact that UNA now ranks fourth highest in international student enrollment among Alabama's universities.

VII. ADVANCEMENT AND UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE MATTERS

Committee chair Whitaker noted that the one item on the agenda for the full Board at today's meeting – **Update on UNA Foundation and University Endowments** – had been reviewed in the committee setting the previous day. There were no questions concerning this at today's meeting.

Ms. Whitaker also shared various informational items from this committee's June 13 discussions, including:

- Increase in number of unique donors on trend to exceed this year's goal for fourth year in a row
- Approach of \$70 million mark in our \$100 million comprehensive campaign
- Continued progress and collaboration in town/gown relationships
- Governmental relations efforts resulting in sizable increase in FY 2025 state appropriation and award of significant federal funding for new engineering building

VIII. CAMPUS LIFE, ATHLETICS, AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MATTERS

Committee chair Pierce reported on the array of topics covered during this committee's June 13 meeting. Two information items were on the agenda for today's full Board meeting:

A. Preview of Fall Campus Housing Options and Occupancy Levels

Housing applications for fall are up 3% over last year and have risen steadily over the past several years. At present, 94% of all residential students have their housing assignments for the fall.

B. Compliance with Alabama Act 2024-34

Ms. Ellis was asked to share comments on how UNA began decentralizing its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts in 2022, but is making further adjustments to internal practice and procedures in response to this legislation that takes effect on October 1. UNA will always remain true to its mission of being welcoming to all, and we feel very comfortable with our position relative to the directives of the new law.

Mr. Pierce also shared various other informational items from this committee's June 13 discussions, including:

- This year's 50th anniversary of fraternity/sorority life at UNA and high overall GPA of students involved in Greek life
- Athletic team accomplishments, 4000+ hours of community service, and noteworthy high GPAs among women's golf, football, and beach volleyball student-athletes
- Beach volleyball coach Kaleb VanDePerre named UNA's first ASUN Coach of the Year
- Installation of new softball field turf
- Today's groundbreaking for Bank Independent Stadium as culmination of 50 years of discussion for need of an on-campus stadium

IX. FINANCE, FACILITIES, AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MATTERS

Committee chair Abroms presented items from this committee's June 13 discussions that were on the agenda for the full Board at today's meeting:

A. Review of Financial Information for Quarter Ending March 31, 2024

The quarterly financial report was thoroughly reviewed in the committee setting, and while scholarship support remains strong, enrollment growth is facilitating a positive trend in net tuition. The allocation of \$10.6 million in state Advancement and Technology (A&T) funding will eliminate the deficit in this year's budget. It is recognized, however, that this is "one-time money" and that a continued conservative budgeting approach is important. The quest for equitable funding versus sister institutions in the state continues through our Progress 208 efforts. There were no questions, and this information item required no action by the Board.

B. Resolution Approving Proposed University Tuition and Fees for 2024-2025 Academic Year

In his summary comments, Mr. Abroms pointed out that the differentiated tuition model implemented last fall is working well, and there are no increases proposed for tuition and fees in the coming academic year. With the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, and Personnel Committee and upon motion by Mr. Abroms and second by Mr. Page, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

C. Resolution Authorizing Expenditures for Academic Software

Following summary comments by Mr. Abroms, with the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, and Personnel Committee and upon motion by Mr. Abroms and second by Mr. Pierce, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

D. Information Items

Mr. Abroms noted two additional items brought forward by the Committee, neither of which required any action by the Board:

- (1) **Public Posting of Financial Disclosure Information** – This information item is provided in the meeting materials as a part of each June agenda.
- (2) **2022-2023 Audit Report** – This latest financial audit conducted by the State Examiners of Public Accounts is posted on the UNA website.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Trustees Annual Reaffirmation of Acknowledgement of Fiduciary Duties

Following comments by Mr. Trapp, Board members collectively acknowledged their fiduciary role with the University by submitting signed individual reaffirmation statements at the conclusion of the meeting. These signed statements will be held on file in the President's Office as documentation in support of compliance with SACSCOC accreditation standards. *(Statements would be secured after the meeting from those Trustees who were not present in person.)*

B. Results of 2024 Board of Trustees Self-Assessment Survey

Mr. Trapp thanked Board members for participating in the recent self-evaluation process and encouraged them to study the responses and comments. While communication in certain areas is an opportunity for improvement, the survey clearly shows there is mutual trust and respect among Trustees and that the Board works together for the best interests of the University. All Trustees received the final survey report, and the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee reviewed the evaluation in greater detail at its meeting the preceding afternoon. This item required no action by the Board at today's meeting.

C. Report from Committee to Nominate 2024-2025 President Pro Tempore and Vice President Pro Tempore of the UNA Board of Trustees

On behalf of the nominating committee consisting of Trustees Buchanan, Page, and Pierce, Mr. Pierce submitted the recommendation that Mr. Trapp and Ms. Sanford be elected to another two-year term to serve as the Board's President and Vice President Pro Tempore of the Board, respectively. There being no other nominations, the committee recommendation was approved upon motion by Mr. Pierce, second by Mr. Abrams, and a unanimous vote.

XI. MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Trapp advised that an executive session was needed to discuss legal issues. As an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Alabama, Ms. Fite-Morgan could affirm that the Board's discussion of these matters in executive session was authorized under Section 3 of the Code of Alabama that allows for executive session to discuss potential legal issues/litigation. Therefore, an executive session would be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Upon motion by Mr. Buchanan, second by Mr. Page, and a unanimous vote, the meeting recessed at 10:07 a.m. for a short break. At approximately 10:15, the Board entered into executive session. Mr. Cochran, Ms. Fite-Morgan, Mr. Haslam, Dr. Looney, Dr. Smith, and Mr. Thornton remained in the room with Dr. Kitts and the Board during this closed session.

Ms. Whitaker continued to participate remotely via videoconference, but had to exit the meeting at 11:00. She sent an email message expressing her support for the proposed action items considered in executive session.

The Board reconvened in regular session at 11:18 a.m. Mr. Trapp reported that the Board had three action items to present from its discussions in executive session:

1. On behalf of the Campus Life, Athletics, and Diversity Committee, Mr. Pierce presented a **Resolution Approving Design, Budgetary Approach, and Groundbreaking for Construction of Bank Independent Stadium** that was considered in executive session and viewed favorably by the Board. Upon motion by Mr. Pierce and second by Mr. Russell, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Trapp noted that an on-campus stadium represents a significant financial investment, is a priority project for the Board and for the University as a whole, and has been endorsed by the student body for some time.
2. Mr. Trapp then provided summary comments concerning a **Resolution Approving Interim Ground Lease of Specific University Property to the Public Educational Building Authority for Construction of Bank Independent Stadium** that was considered in executive session and viewed favorably by the Board. Upon motion by Mr. Anderson and second by Mr. Page, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

3. Next, Mr. Trapp gave an overview of a **Resolution Authorizing Tax-Exempt Financing for New Multi-Purpose Facility** that was considered in executive session and viewed favorably by the Board. Mr. Buchanan made a motion for approval that was seconded by Mr. Russell. Several Trustees made comments as summarized below concerning this significant building project:

- This resolution sets a cap for borrowing that protects the University's credit rating. It was wise that Mr. Thornton discussed this matter with rating agencies well in advance.
- The world of college sports has a changing landscape, and the impact of NIL (Name, Image, and Likeness) policies remains unknown. UNA will need to be watchful but should remain competitive. Its emphasis as a Division I institution is strong on academics, not just athletics.
- The level of careful thought and due diligence leading to the stadium project has built a strong foundation and gives the Board much comfort. Challenges will be addressed as they come to light, but moving forward with construction is the right direction.
- An on-campus stadium has been under discussion for decades. "Change happens very slowly...and then all at once."
- The Board is confident that academic quality and success are the priority at UNA. The stadium is a culmination investment in efforts to enrich the student experience and enhance the local community.

With no further discussion, the resolution was then approved by unanimous vote.

The Board had no other action items to present from its discussions in executive session.

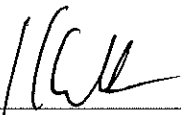
MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no other business to come before the Board, upon motion by Mr. Pierce, second by Mr. Anderson, and a unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

Approved September 13, 2024



President Pro Tempore



Secretary