

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA
FLORENCE, ALABAMA
9:00 a.m., Friday, September 8, 2023**

The Board of Trustees for the University of North Alabama met on Friday, September 8, 2023, in Banquet Hall C of the Guillot University Center in accordance with Section 6 of Act No. 773 of the 1967 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature. A letter from three Trustees (dated August 18, 2023) 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 September 8. 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 under the date of August 30, 2023. Also on August 30, 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 9:00 a.m.

I. INVOCATION

At the invitation of Mr. Trapp, the opening invocation was offered by Dr. Randy Thompson, pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Tuscumbia.

II. ROLL CALL

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

Trustee Marty Abroms	Trustee Jim Page	Trustee Nancy Sanford
Trustee Joel Anderson II	Trustee Steve Pierce	Trustee Gary Smith
Trustee Wendell Gunn	Trustee Simpson Russell	Trustee Will Trapp

Trustee Kyle Buchanan was absent at roll call, but joined the meeting at 9:12. Ex officio member Governor Kay Ivey and Trustee Anne Whitaker 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, and Interim Chief Diversity Officer
- Ms. Amber Fite-Morgan, General Counsel
- Mr. Kevin Haslam, Vice President for University Advancement
- Dr. Katie Kinney, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Dr. Josh Looney, Athletics Director
- Mr. Evan Thornton, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
- Dr. K.C. White, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Mr. Duell Aldridge, Coordinator of University Center Operations and Event Management
- Mr. Andre Barnes, Interim Director of University Police Services
- Dr. Vince Brewton, Dean of the Cole Honors College
- Dr. Greg Carnes, Dean of the Sanders College of Business and Technology
- 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 President of Staff Senate
- Dr. Matt Green, Interim Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences
- Dr. Lauren Killen, 2023-2024 President of Faculty Senate
- Dr. Tera Kirkman, Dean of Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions
- Dr. Amber Pault, Deputy Provost and Board of Trustees Parliamentarian
- Dr. Lee Renfroe, 2023-2024 Chair of Shared Governance Executive Committee
- Ms. Amber Sandvig, 2023-2024 President of Student Government Association
- 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
WAAY-TV 31 reporter Shawn Bracey
WAFF-TV 48 reporter Aria Pons

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Trapp submitted the agenda for consideration. Upon motion by Mr. Smith and second by Mr. Pierce, 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 June 9, 2023, Quarterly Board Meeting
- B. Resolution Authorizing the President to Budget Additional Funds for FY 2023-2024

Upon motion by Mr. Russell and second by Mr. Abroms, 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:

- Expectation of \approx 10,600 headcount by fall census date and another record enrollment;
- Considerations as to ideal enrollment size for UNA given its brand identity, budget, and infrastructure;
- Academic and institutional profile (record retention rate, doctoral degree programs, Honors College expansion, increasing number of students winning national awards, etc.)
- Current status with regard to state funding and Project 208 efforts; and
- Record number of residential students this fall (\approx 2,200).

VI. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MATTERS

Committee chair Page presented an action item from the previous day's committee discussions – **Resolution Approving a Graduate Micro-Credential in Project Management and a Graduate Micro-Credential in Data Analytics**. These micro-credentials are in alignment with our workforce development initiatives, and the required courses are already in place within the MBA degree program (i.e., can be implemented at little to no cost). With the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee, and upon motion by Mr. Page and second by Dr. Gunn, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Page then shared information on other topics discussed at this committee's September 7 meeting, including:

- UNA's five new academic programs on the agenda for formal approval at today's meeting of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE);
- \$100,000 AmeriCorps planning grant UNA recently received from the Governor's office to assist foster care students in making the transition into higher education; and
- Exponential growth in the number of academic programs over the past several years and the thinking that we engage a smart growth strategy to more fully develop and mature those programs.

VII. ADVANCEMENT AND UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE MATTERS

Committee vice chair Page highlighted topics covered in this committee's September 7 meeting, including:

- Newly elected officers for the UNA Foundation Board of Directors;
- Update on Project 208 efforts;
- Record giving with over \$31 million in private gifts raised so far this year; and
- Rise in number of unique donors (close to reaching goal for this year).

One information item from the previous day's committee discussions – **Update on UNA Foundation and University Endowments** – was on the agenda for the full Board at today's meeting. There were no questions, and the endowment report had been reviewed in the committee setting the previous day.

VIII. CAMPUS LIFE, ATHLETICS, AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MATTERS

Committee chair Pierce reported on the array of topics covered during this committee's September 7 meeting, including:

- Makeup of this year's Presidential Mentors Academy cohort;
- Review committee's work in considering design proposals for Bank Independent Stadium;
- Status of athletics season ticket sales and Flowers Hall lobby renovations;
- Record number of registrants for this year's sorority recruitment;
- New "Family Portal" as information sharing mechanism for students' families; and
- Almost 2,200 students in campus housing and affiliated external properties this fall.

Mr. Pierce read aloud the one action item from the previous day's committee discussions – **Resolution Honoring Dr. Wendell Gunn and Commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Desegregation of the University of North Alabama** – that was on the agenda for the full Board at today's meeting. With the recommendation of the Campus Life, Athletics, and Diversity Committee, and upon motion by Mr. Pierce and second by Mr. Abroms, the resolution was approved by a vote of nine (9) in favor, none opposed, and one (1) abstention by Dr. Gunn. Dr. Gunn received a standing ovation from all in the meeting room.

IX. FINANCE, FACILITIES, AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MATTERS

Committee chair Abroms presented items from this committee's September 7 discussions that were on the agenda for the full Board at today's meeting:

A. Review of Financial Information for Quarter Ending June 30, 2023

The quarterly financial report was thoroughly reviewed in the committee setting. Mr. Abroms noted that we are seeing an increase in net tuition, and a one-time appropriation of \$17 million as UNA's share from the Governor's distribution of American Rescue Plan Act funds prevented a deficit at the end of the current fiscal year. There were no questions, and this information item required no action by the Board.

B. Resolution Approving University of North Alabama Proposed FY 2023-2024 Budgets

Mr. Abroms described that the proposed E&G budget for the coming fiscal year calls for \$172 million in revenue and \$178 million in expenditures. This would project a \$6 million deficit, but it should not impact UNA's good credit rating. Mr. Abroms reviewed some of the mitigation strategies in place to work toward a balanced budget. With the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, and Personnel Committee and upon motion by Mr. Abroms and second by Mr. Russell, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Trapp noted that achieving a balanced budget is a process and that private fundraising and Project 208 are critical to long-term success.

C. Deferred Maintenance Budget for FY 2023-2024

The list of deferred maintenance items represents another strain on the institutional budget since the projects in need of attention exceed the dollars available to address them. \$2 million is allocated to the prioritized list for the coming year. Priority status for items on the list may shuffle somewhat if critical repair/maintenance issues arise unexpectedly. There were no questions, and this information item required no action by the Board.

D. Resolution Approving New Benefit Programs for University Employees: Paid Birth Recovery Leave ---and--- Paid Parental Leave

Mr. Abroms noted that these proposed policies were discussed by the Committee at its last meeting in June, but action was deferred. The proposals have been modified and now presented with a requirement of two (2) years of service for an employee to be eligible. The Committee recognizes that this employee benefit is a trend at other universities. With the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, and Personnel Committee, and upon motion by Mr. Abroms and second by Ms. Sanford, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

E. Resolution Authorizing Expenditures for Digital Marketing, Micro-Credential Website Support, and Public Safety Dispatching

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. Anderson, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

F. Resolution Approving Additional Funding to Proceed with Previously Approved Facilities Project: LaGrange Hall

The current LaGrange Hall is beyond its useful life and has been closed for the past few years. Demolition of the current structure and construction of a new 192-bed facility in the central area of campus will greatly assist in meeting student housing demand. Funds are in hand to cover the project. The new facility is expected to open in fall 2025 and will generate a positive cash flow. With the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, and Personnel Committee and upon motion by Mr. Abroms and second by Mr. Buchanan, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote. Though no debt is required for this project, Mr. Trapp pointed out that while most universities use their borrowing power to support athletics, UNA's borrowing history has been in support of academic programs and residential facilities.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

**Report from Ad Hoc Presidential Evaluation Committee -- and --
Resolution Approving Revised Terms to Presidential Employment Agreement**

Following Mr. Trapp's general introductory remarks commending Dr. Kitts' leadership, Committee chair Russell reported on the outcome of Dr. Kitts' annual evaluation that resulted in a very positive and favorable satisfaction rating. Mr. Russell as chair presented in the form of a motion a resolution containing his recommendations as to contract and goals/objectives for the coming year. Dr. Gunn seconded the motion, and the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

XI. MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Trapp noted that an executive session was needed to discuss proposed naming matters from a Board committee and any updates on 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 the general reputation and character of individuals and to discuss legal ramifications of pending litigation. Therefore, an executive session would be in compliance with the Open Meetings Act. Upon motion by Mr. Russell, second by Mr. Page, and a unanimous vote, the meeting recessed at 10:15 a.m. for a short break and to enter into executive session.

At approximately 10:20, the Board entered into executive session. Ms. Fite-Morgan, Mr. Haslam, and Dr. Looney remained in the room with Dr. Kitts and the Board during this closed session.

The Board reconvened in regular session at 10:40 a.m. Mr. Page presented two action items from the Advancement and University Relations Committee that were considered in executive session and viewed favorably by the Board:

(1) Resolution Approving Additional Honorary Namings Related to Bank Independent Stadium Construction Project

Upon motion by Mr. Page and second by Mr. Pierce, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

(2) Resolution Authorizing Honorary Naming of the UNA Head Men's Golf Coach Position for the Schmitz Family

Upon motion by Mr. Page and second by Mr. Smith, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

The Board had no other action items to present from its discussions in executive session. Mr. Haslam and the Advancement team were commended for their highly productive efforts in raising private gifts in support of the University.

With regard to the resolution adopted earlier in the meeting as the University looks to commemorating next week the 60th anniversary of its desegregation, Dr. Gunn shared some brief personal experiences concerning his 1963 entry into then-Florence State College.

MOTION TO ADJOURN

There being no other business to come before the Board, upon motion by Mr. Page, second by Mr. Buchanan, and a unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 10:51 a.m.

Approved December 15, 2023



President Pro Tempore



Secretary