

Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

UT Health Science Center ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

DATE: February 07, 2025	Mooney Library
DAY: Friday	875 Monroe Avenue
TIME: 11:00 AM CT	Memphis, TN

MINUTES

Present:

Board Members:

Dr. Philip Wenk, Chair
Dr. Josh Wayman
Ms. Margaret Bohm
Dr. Jillian McCarthy (via Zoom)
Dr. Randy Davis
Dr. Natalie Tate
Dr. Michael Ugwueke

Staff:

Dr. Peter Buckley
Mr. Raaj Kurapati
Dr. Cindy Russell
Dr. Chandra West-Alston
Ms. Vikki Massey

Deans:

Dr. Stephen Alway
Dr. Reggie Frye
Dr. Wendy Likes
Dr. Michael Ennis
Dr. Don Thomason
Dr. Ken Tilashalski

Guests: Members of the HSC community and the public were invited to participate either in person or via webcast. Board Member, Dr. Jillian McCarthy, attended virtually.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair, Dr. Phil Wenk, called the meeting to order at 11:00 am CT.

2. Faculty Remembrance

Dr. Ken Tilashalski reflected on the late Dr. Tom Patterson, Assistant Professor in College of Dentistry, who passed away on February 6. Chair Wenk offered a moment of silence.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Chair Wenk asked for any additions or corrections to the November 8, 2024, meeting minutes. As there were no additions or corrections to be made, he called for the minutes to be adopted as presented. No objections noted.

4. Chancellor's Update

Chancellor Peter Buckley stated today would be the final meeting for Chair Wenk and announced Dr. Randy Davis as the new Chair.

A review of 2024 accomplishments was presented including leadership, resolution of gratitude activities, key recruitment and searches, initiatives, organizational and operational changes, philanthropy implementation, and increased statewide presence.

Additionally, 2025 goals were addressed including federal government priorities, key leadership searches, fiscal growth and stability, implementation of strategies, accreditation, philanthropy, hospital partnerships, and the HSC Senior Leadership Academy (which launched its inaugural class in January 2025).

5. College of Nursing Presentation

Dean Wendy Likes presented for College of Nursing and focused on prestigious grants, excellent board pass rates, and updates on Mobile Health Unit expansions.

Remarks: Chancellor Buckley offered his congratulations and appreciation of Dr. Likes' leadership in the turnaround with the West Cancer Foundation relationship.

6. College of Pharmacy Presentation

Dean Reginald Frye presented for College of Pharmacy and focused on faculty and college updates including a curriculum revision, and student news including an updated timeline for the white coat ceremony so that all students can be involved during orientation week.

Remarks: Chair Wenk gave his congratulations on the white coat ceremony.

7. College of Grad Health Presentation

Dean Donald Thomason presented for College of Graduate Health Sciences and highlighted positive survey results, the recent Postdoc Research Showcase, and regional exposure of UT Health Science Center through the upcoming 3-Minute Thesis Competition.

Remarks: Chair Wenk wished competitor, Ishita Kathuria, best of luck in the regional competition.

8. College of Dentistry Presentation

Dean Ken Tilashalski presented for the College of Dentistry. He reported updates on accreditation, curriculum changes, and the Healthy Smiles initiative. He acknowledged Chair Wenk's partnership with the Healthy Smiles initiative.

Remarks: Chair Wenk made remarks on the Healthy Smiles initiative and commissioner involvement.

Dr. Wayman asked if the opportunities would be like Kingsport and Dean Tilashalski answered that it is not exactly the same due to the different models they use across the state.

9. College of Health Professions Presentation

Dean Stephen Alway presented for the College of Health Professions. He addressed several things worth celebrating including student leadership awards, grants, faculty medallions, and a recent student feature in a local communication.

Remarks: No questions.

10. College of Medicine Presentation.

Dr. Matt Ennis presented on the College of Medicine on behalf of Interim Dean, Nick Verne. Dr. Ennis spoke on graduate questionnaire, match day, chair search updates, graduation, and rotations.

Remarks: No questions.

11. 25-26 Proposed Tuition & Fees

Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer (EVC-COO), Raaj Kurapati presented the 25-26 tuition and mandatory fees proposal which included the establishment of a new international student tuition table. He covered the strategic process used to land on the recommendation, in alignment with UT Board expectations. Multiple factors were considered, and a program-by-program tuition evaluation completed after comparison of the tuition rates of peers and direct competitors. As it relates to international tuition rates, the broad recommendation is for the rate to be at least 2X the resident rate with flexibility to set it at up to 2.5X the resident rate for certain programs. This would also allow for strategic scholarship offers to attract the best and brightest students while ensuring that these students pay a reasonable premium over resident and US out of state students. The tuition proposal (*refer to slide deck for tuition proposal outline*) was reviewed and approved by the Planning and Budget Council on January 22, 2025.

Questions: Dr. Randy Davis asked for clarification on the basis used for international students - if the international student's rate would be less than an out of state citizen, and if the international fee schedule applies to any non-citizens here on visas.

Answer: EVC-COO Kurapati responded they used the domestic rate times 2 (up to 2.5). Their rate would be at least the same as out-of-state students and in most cases higher. As for the fee table, any student already here on a visa will be grandfathered in – new international students will pay the new rate.

In continuation with his presentation, EVC-COO Kurapati addressed the multi-prong scholarship strategy. In conjunction with Advancement and Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs they are looking into a scholarship strategy to address need and find merit-based opportunities. The following questions were asked and answered:

Question: Dr. Michael Ugwueke asked for a breakdown of out-of-state and international students and asked if most international students are on scholarship.

Answer: About 25% of students are out of state and around 3% are international students. The goal is to grow the international student population to be fee paying.

Question: Dr. Wayman asked how the money will address student concerns.

Answers: EVC-COO Kurapati said the areas that will receive money will be addressed later in the presentation.

Question: Dr. Davis asked for clarification on how the proposed rate for international students relates to peers.

Answer: International rates are at or about equal to out-of-state across our peers and the proposal is not substantially higher as the rankings of programs were also evaluated as part of the process.

Question: Dr. Wayman asked how rates look amongst aspirational peers.

Answer: In most cases we are lower than aspirational peers, specifically private institutions. Strategic goal is to set the price point correctly and recruit students you want while offering financial help through merit or need based scholarships.

EVC-COO Kurapati continued with his presentation and pointed out the program-by-program differences and peer competitors. Additionally, in-state, out-of-state, and international tuition rate proposal summaries were presented. More discussion and questions followed but webcast audio was not picked up.

Chair Wenk addressed the board to ensure all were comfortable with the proposal as the decision would need to go to the UT board in Knoxville.

Question: Ms. Meredith Bohm asked if the scholarship restructuring would be done in time for fall 2025.

Answer: EVC-COO Kurapati answered some would be ready for Fall 2025 but to get to where we want to be as an institution it will take time because it is a comprehensive project requiring a well thought out and comprehensive strategy.

Question: Dr. Natalie Tate requested future information be received ahead of the presentation but appreciates the walk through.

EVC-COO Kurapati continued his presentation by presenting the mandatory fee adjustments which include student activities fees and campus recreation fees. The estimated financial impact is a 2.2% average increase for in-state tuition and 3.1% average increase for out-of-state tuition. The estimated financial impact should result in \$2.1 million in gross tuition and \$153,000 in mandatory fees. More questions followed:

Question: Dr. Ugwueke asked if the estimated impact assumes the student population will remain the same.

Answer: EVC-COO Kurapati said they did look at the landscape and have done their best to keep tuition increases below the inflation rate.

Chair Wenk asked for a motion and a second.

Recommendation Proposal: 2025-2026 Tuition and Mandatory Fee Increase

Action: Motion approved by Dr. Ugwueke and seconded by Dr. Davis with all in favor

Remarks: Dr. Wenk offered positive remarks for EVC-COO Kurapati's strategies for approaching finances from a business perspective.

12. Other Business

Chair Wenk asked for additional business. As this marks the final meeting in which Chair Wenk serves as Advisory Board Chair, Chancellor Buckley gave special remarks on the decades long career and leadership of Chair Wenk and shared a photo of Chair Wenk's bronze bust which elicited laughs from those in the audience. A standing ovation occurred, and Chancellor Buckley offered the floor to Chair Wenk.

Chair Wenk spoke on the tenure of his seven-year service as UT Health Science Center Advisory Board Chair and gave special acknowledgement to various UT, state, and board leadership. He concluded with the poem, "A Bag of Tools" by R. L. Sharpe which speaks to the true meaning of legacy.

13. Adjournment

The meeting concluded at 12:27 p.m.