

Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes

DATE:	MAY 8, 2026	Mooney Library
DAY:	FRIDAY	875 Monroe Avenue
TIME:	11:00 AM	Memphis, TN

Present:

Board Members:	Staff:	Deans/Interim Deans:
Randall Davis (Chairman)	Peter Buckley	Reggie Frye
Jillian McCarthy (Zoom)	Raaj Kurapati (Secretary)	Ashley Harkrider
Gary Passons	Vikki Massey	Michael Hocker
Rick Spell	Cindy Russell	Wendy Likes
Natalie Tate	Charlie Snyder	Jessica Snowden (<i>Interim</i>)
Samantha Townsend	Paul Wesolowski	Ken Tilashalski

Guests: Members of the Health Science Center community and the public were invited to participate either in person or via webcast.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Randy Davis called the meeting to order at 11:03 am. Secretary Raaj Kurapati conducted roll call of the board members in attendance (in-person and virtual by Zoom) and quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The motion for approval of February 6, 2026, meeting minutes was made by board member Mr. Rick Spell and seconded by board member Dr. Natalie Tate.

3. Chancellor's Update

Chancellor Peter Buckley provided updates on recent activities, recognizing Dean Likes; new Board member and alumnus Dr. Gary Passons; and former dental representative Dr. Josh Wayman, who offered remarks upon receiving recognition. He also acknowledged term-limited members, Dr. Michael Ugwueke and Dr. Natalie Tate, noting that their replacements will be determined through gubernatorial appointments. Chancellor Buckley highlighted the Board's 2022 endorsement of the strategic plan and noted progress in branding, financial performance, enrollment, rural health initiatives, COMIB funding, and the launch of the inaugural Alumni Weekend.

4. Recognition of Maury Regional Health

Vice Chancellor for Strategic Partnerships Paul Wesolowski introduced a new partnership with Maury Regional Health and welcomed Dr. Martin Chaney, CEO, who joined by Zoom. The partnership establishes the first primary care residency program in Columbia, Tennessee, with a focus on training and retaining physicians in rural communities. Dr. Chaney shared the history of the collaboration, expressing appreciation for the partnership and noting the program's planned start date of July 1.

Remarks: Secretary Kurapati noted for the record that Board member Dr. Jillian McCarthy joined the meeting via Zoom.

5. Rural Health Presentation

Dr. Wendy Likes, Dean of the College of Nursing, and Dr. Jessica Snowden, Vice Chancellor for Research, presented on rural healthcare, highlighting workforce shortages across Tennessee, particularly in rural areas. They discussed a multi-year state-supported initiative aligned with the university-led Center of Excellence, aimed at strengthening rural health priorities and sustainability. They noted the university's strong positioning as a partner in statewide efforts, including a previously awarded \$12 million grant to establish the Center of Excellence in Rural Healthcare, and outlined current initiatives, accomplishments, and upcoming program expansions.

Remarks: Chair Davis inquired how other states are promoting rural healthcare. Dr. Likes responded that Tennessee is well positioned due to the Governor's strong focus on rural health initiatives. Dr. Snowden noted that approaches vary by state and emphasized ongoing discussions around regional collaboration and expanding partnerships beyond state borders. Chancellor Buckley added that former Chair Phil Wenk previously served on the Governor's rural healthcare task force.

6. FY 2027 Budget Proposal

EVC and COO Raaj Kurapati presented the FY2027 budget proposal, noting that, upon approval, it will be submitted to the UT Board of Trustees at the end of June. He reviewed prior financial challenges, including an internal deficit, and highlighted progress to the current position, including increasing reserves to 180 days in alignment with policy.

Mr. Kurapati outlined strategic investments within the FY2027 budget, previously reviewed by the Planning and Budget Committee (PBC), focused on enhancing the student experience and supporting campus operations. These include \$8.75 million in recurring operational investments and \$4.9 million in non-recurring operational investments.

For capital projects, Mr. Kurapati proposed a total investment of \$334.4 million, including \$311 million in State of Tennessee funding for the College of Medicine Interdisciplinary Building (COMIB), along with institutional support and ongoing philanthropic efforts. He noted the project is in the final stages of planning and design.

The FY2027 budget recommendation totals \$747,012,368 in operating recurring and non-recurring funds (restricted and unrestricted).

Remarks: Dr. Tate inquired about the performance-based compensation adjustment and why it is structured as a one-time rather than recurring investment. Mr. Kurapati explained that a full adjustment will be addressed through a cost-of-living increase; however, due to the difference between institutional needs and state funding, the plan includes both a recurring base adjustment and a one-time merit component. Chancellor Buckley expressed appreciation for Mr. Kurapati's leadership, and Chair Davis concurred. Mr. Kurapati also acknowledged the contributions of the Planning and Budget Council.

Action Item: Chair Davis called for a motion to recommend approval of the budget; the motion was made and approved with no opposition.

7. Other Business and Discussion

Secretary Kurapati informed the Board that the August meeting will be rescheduled due to a campus leadership obligation. Alternative dates will be shared via email, and the schedule will be finalized upon consensus. Chair Davis reflected on his experience as both a former student and current Board member, noting positive feedback and strong potential for UT Health Science Center.

8. Adjournment

Chair Davis adjourned the meeting at 12:07 p.m.