

Advisory Board Meeting

Minutes

DATE:	FEBRUARY 6, 2026	Mooney Library
DAY:	FRIDAY	875 Monroe Avenue
TIME:	10:30 AM	Memphis, TN

Present:

Board Members:	Staff:	Deans:
Randall Davis (Chairman)	Peter Buckley	Reggie Frye
Jillian McCarthy	Raaj Kurapati, Secretary	Ashley Harkrider
Rick Spell		Michael Hocker
Natalie Tate (Zoom)		Wendy Likes
Samantha Townsend		Jessica Snowden (Interim)
Josh Wayman		Ken Tilashalski
Michael Ugwueke		

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

Chairman Randy Davis called the meeting to order at 10:35 am. Secretary Raaj Kurapati conducted roll call of the board members in attendance (in-person and virtual) quorum was established.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The motion for approval of November 14, 2025, meeting minutes was made by board member Dr. Ugwueke and seconded by board member Mr. Rick Spell.

3. Chancellor's Update

Chancellor Peter Buckley took the podium and reflected on the previous evening's Chairman's Circle Fireside Chat event featuring President Randy Boyd. He touted a full and great week at UT Health Science Center which included Governor Bill Lee's proposed budget of a \$311M allocation towards the College of Medicine Interdisciplinary Building (COMIB), an Ascension Saint Thomas retreat which included all HSC deans, and a key recruitment of a Chief Pediatrician at Le Bonheur and Pediatrics Chair.

4. Recognition of East Tennessee Children's Hospital

Vice Chancellor of Strategic Partnership Paul Wesolowski took the podium to introduce Dr. Matt Schaefer and Dr. Suzanne Rybczynski from East Tennessee Children's Hospital. Each joined virtually

via Zoom to give remarks on the newest partnership of the residency program starting in Knoxville. Dr. Schaefer gave thanks to Dr. Buckley and Mr. Wesolowski for their leadership and thanked the team of Dr. Dudley, Dean Craft, and Amanda Wilson. Chief Medical Officer and Chair of Department of Pediatrics at COM-Knoxville Dr. Rybczynski shared background on the collaboration and upcoming steps. President and CEO of UT Medical Dr. Keith Gray gave acknowledgement to the partnership and echoed the advocacy of the transformation of health in Tennessee, including a pipeline of providers within the state.

Remarks: Chairman Davis shared his excitement of the news and expansion of the Health Science Center throughout the state.

5. College of Medicine Update

Executive Dean of the College of Medicine (COM) Dr. Michael Hocker delivered remarks on his first 100 days at UT Health Science Center. He expressed appreciation to leadership for recruiting him and outlined his main priorities during his initial months. He highlighted key takeaways, including accreditation outcomes; strong peer institution rankings for residency programs, residents, and R1 research; research; statewide integration efforts; strengthening the student pipeline; his leadership philosophy; and initiatives to modernize space. He concluded by emphasizing the institution's strong foundation while noting the need for broader visibility and underscoring the importance of advancing medicine to improve healthcare outcomes across the state.

Remarks: Chairman Davis commented on the student pipeline and noted the positive impact of current alumni messaging on pipeline growth. Executive Dean Hocker noted his recent meetings with the Communications and Marketing team focused on improving the reach and effectiveness of COM.

6. College of Medicine Interdisciplinary Building Update

EVC and COO Raaj Kurapati began with a presentation on the COMIB and the two-year journey to present day, capped by the recent announcement that Governor Lee is including the building in the proposed state budget. EVC and COO Kurapati invited colleagues Ami Shah from HOK and Amber Fortner from brg3s to present their work on the space utilization study, programming and design phase. Ms. Shah and Ms. Fortner said the overarching goal was to take a comprehensive assessment and align it with the strategic plan of the university. In collaboration with many internal stakeholders throughout the space utilization and programming phases, design and construction could begin this year, on the condition of legislature confirming funding in May. The group is aggressively hoping for a building opening in the fall of 2029.

Remarks: Chancellor Buckley stated that we need to be respectful of the legislature as they take their time to come to a decision over the next few months.

7. Enterprise Risk Management

The Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) practice was launched one year ago to ensure a comprehensive program to assess, manage, and mitigate risk. EVC and COO Kurapati presented the results of the exercise which identified over 400 risks which were narrowed down by executive leadership to the top 10 risks. The next steps include building the ERM exercise into an annual practice that identifies strategies.

Remarks: Chancellor Buckley commented that the rating of the institutional risk changes on a dime and something to always be mindful of to ensure a high reputation.

8. Tuition and Fee Proposal AY26-27

EVC and COO Kurapati reminded the Advisory Board they must annually review tuition and fee recommendations for the next academic year. The approved action then goes to the Board of Trustees for their consideration.

Presented was the tuition and fee strategy which was created to assess major financial decisions, analyzed through the Planning and Budget Council (PBC). EVC and COO Kurapati presented several key considerations and processes for the tuition strategy that brought PBC to unanimously approve a 1.8-2.0% across the board tuition adjustment (\$2.2 million gross tuition based on Fall 2025 enrollment per college/program). Funds will be set aside for inflationary pressures and cost increases, and recurring funding for need based scholarships. Any remaining funds will be used towards debt service and strategic investments as vetted through PBC. Program specific fee adjustments will occur, but no mandatory across-the-board fee adjustments are proposed.

Remarks: Chancellor Buckley addressed the Advisory Board to confirm executive leadership received broad support when presenting the proposal to Student Government Association Executive Council and faculty senate.

Dr. Natalie Tate requested confirmation of the percentage of in-state students, which EVC and COO Kurapati confirmed is approximately 75-80%, but varies by college. Dr. Tate also asked whether contiguous counties are considered in-state; EVC and COO Kurapati explained that a geographic radius is used and, if approved by Board of Trustees, eligible students would be grandfathered into those preferences. Lastly, Dr. Tate inquired whether a slightly higher tuition increase for out-of-state students had been considered. EVC and COO Kurapati acknowledged that this option was discussed in some cases but determined that tuition rates are already closely aligned with peer institutions and a larger increase could negatively impact recruitment out-of-state students, in certain programs. Where there was opportunity to remain competitive with peers (including consideration of the quality of our programs vs others and overall ranking), we do charge a premium for out-of-state students.

Dr. Josh Wayman asked whether anticipated tuition increase at peer institutions were considered. EVC and COO Kurapati noted that only currently available information could be factored in, but they expect peer institutions to implement similar increases due to shared financial pressures. He further explained that institutions able to forgo rate increases often benefit from higher numbers of out-of-state and international students who pay premium tuition and/or from strong foundation support. A strategic scholarship review is underway to better align and structure scholarship funding.

At Chairman Davis's request, EVC and COO Kurapati reported that out-of-state and international students comprise approximately 20-25% of total enrollment, with most of the international student enrollments concentrated in research areas. Vice Chancellor Academic, Faculty, and Student Affairs Dr. Cindy Russell added that some programs enroll up to 30% out-of-state students, though this varies by program.

Dr. Jillian McCarthy asked about the timeline to allow students sufficient time to secure financial funding. EVC and COO Kurapati explained that, if approved, the proposal would be presented to the Board of Trustees at the end of February, with communication to follow upon approval, ahead of program start dates in July. He also noted that efforts are underway to enhance scholarship strategies, collaborate with the state on additional aid that does not conflict with loan caps, and introduce new payment plan options.

Chairman Davis spoke from the perspective of an alumnus who saw many years of no tuition increase, and offered it seems reasonable in consideration to the value.

Recommendation Proposal: Approval of a 2% across-the-board tuition increase for the 2026-2027 academic year for in-state, out-of-state, and international students.

A motion to approve the tuition adjustment was made by Dr. Wayman and seconded by Mr. Rick Spell. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Other Business and Feedback

Chancellor Buckley drew attention to the retirement of Vice Chancellor of Advancement Ms. Brigitte Grant. He thanked her for her leadership and time.

10. Adjournment

Chairman Davis adjourned the meeting at 11:56 am.