

MINUTES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH ALABAMA BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FLORENCE, ALABAMA
9:00 a.m., Friday, June 13, 2025

The Board of Trustees for the University of North Alabama met on Friday, June 13, 2025, 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 May 23, 2025) 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 13. 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 to Trustees from the Governor's office in advance of the meeting under the date of June 3, 2025. On June 4, 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 9:04 a.m.

I. INVOCATION

Mr. Trapp offered the opening invocation.

II. ROLL CALL

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

Trustee Marty Abrams
Trustee Wendell Gunn
Trustee Jim Page

Trustee Steve Pierce
Trustee Simpson Russell
Trustee Nancy Sanford

Trustee Will Trapp
Trustee Anne Whitaker

Trustee Kyle Buchanan was present via videoconference.

Ex officio member Governor Kay Ivey and Trustees Joel Anderson II and Gary Smith were absent. A quorum of voting members was in attendance.

Others present for all or part of the meeting:

- Ms. Ann Berry, gubernatorial appointee to UNA Board of Trustees effective July 8, 2025
- Mr. Jason Cochran, Executive Director of Governmental Relations and Economic Development
- Dr. Minnette Ellis, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and Executive Director for University Priorities
- Ms. Amber Fite-Morgan, General Counsel
- Mr. Kevin Haslam, Vice President for University Advancement
- Dr. Josh Looney, Athletics Director
- Mr. Evan Thornton, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs
- Dr. K.C. White, Vice President for Student Affairs
- Dr. Doug Barrett, Interim Dean of the Sanders College of Business and Technology
- Dr. Vince Brewton, Dean of the Cole Honors College
- Dr. Justin Carter, 2025-2026 Faculty Senate President
- Ms. Cindy Conlon, Associate Vice President for Facilities Administration and Planning
- Ms. Michelle Eubanks, Executive Director of University Media and Public Relations

- Mr. Gregory Gunn, son of Trustee Wendell Gunn
- Mr. Ethan Humphres, Chief Information Officer & Asst. VP for Information Technology Services
- Mr. Matthew Jones, Director of Student Activities and Leadership Development
- Dr. Tera Kirkman, Dean of Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions
- Dr. Amber Paulk, Deputy Provost
- Dr. Ansley Quiros, Chair of History Department
- Ms. Anna Leigh Rossi, 2025-2026 Staff Senate President
- Dr. Matthew Schoenbachler, Professor of History
- Ms. Regina Sherrill, Senior Assistant to the President for Administration
- Student Government Association officers for 2025-2026:
 - Ms. Alex Rhoades, President
 - Ms. Nicole Ballenger, Vice President
 - Mr. Matt Hanback, Treasurer
- Ms. Julie Taylor, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management
- Mr. Lee Taylor, Director of Enrollment Marketing
- Mr. Randall Watts, University Librarian
- Ms. Mary Beth Willis, Instructional Designer
- Mr. Russ Wilson, Access Control Manager and Senior Network Specialist
- Dr. Ryan Zayac, Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering

Also present: *TimesDaily* reporter David Glovach
 Documentary filmmaker Norton Dill and his film crew
 Andrew Betterton, Mayor of City of Florence

Mayor Betterton was given a few moments to present a proclamation and “Key to the City” to Trustee Gunn to recognize his role in desegregating the University in 1963. Dr. Gunn received a standing ovation.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was not submitted for formal approval/vote. However, there were no objections expressed to the agenda as presented.

IV. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

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

- A. Minutes of March 14, 2025, Quarterly Board Meeting**
- B. Minutes of April 25, 2025, Board Executive Committee Meeting**
- C. Resolution Clarifying the Scope of Learning Agreements with External Entities as an Enrollment Mechanism at the University of North Alabama**
- D. Resolution of Commendation to Wendell W. Gunn, Member, Board of Trustees for the University of North Alabama, 2019-2025**
- E. Resolution of Commendation to Andrea Hunt, 2024-2025 Faculty Senate President, University of North Alabama**

F. Resolution of Commendation to Kerigan Mardis, 2024-2025 Student Government Association President, University of North Alabama

G. Resolution of Commendation to Jeremy Martin, 2024-2025 Staff Senate President, University of North Alabama

Upon motion by Mr. Pierce and second by Ms. Whitaker, 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:

- UNA's thriving and robust enrollment in contrast to higher education difficulties at other colleges and in other areas of the country (mergers to stay in operation, institutional or branch campus closures, declining enrollments, etc.)
- UNA boasts of highest graduation rate increase over past decade among Alabama's universities
- Carnegie Foundation recognition of UNA in the highest tier of its "opportunity" colleges for fostering student success and equipping students for high earnings potential post-graduation
- Decrease in average student loan amount at UNA = lesser financial burden on students

VI. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MATTERS

As committee vice chair, Ms. Sanford highlighted topics covered in this committee's June 12 meeting, including:

- Enrollment, including spring census figures, current summer position, and outlook for fall
- Recent appointments in Academic Affairs:
 - University Librarian
 - Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering
 - Associate Vice Provost for Academic Excellence

Ms. Sanford presented committee items that were on the agenda for the full Board at today's meeting and gave summary comments concerning each item as it was brought forward, including the fact that no additional resources are required for these new academic programs:

A. Resolution Approving the Addition of an Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety Option to the Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology Degree and the Associated Minor in Occupational and Environmental Health and Safety

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.

B. Resolution Approving the Addition of Professional Geography and Sustainability Concentrations to the Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Science in Geography Degree

With the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Ms. Whitaker and second by Mr. Abrams, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

C. Resolution Approving the Addition of a Minor in Clinical Psychology

With the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Pierce and second by Mr. Buchanan, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

D. Resolution Approving the Addition of Engineering Management and Manufacturing Engineering Concentrations to the Master of Business Administration (MBA) Degree Program

With the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Abrams and second by Mr. Page, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

E. Resolution Approving Addition of a Communication Studies Concentration to the Mass Communication Major – and – Deletion of the Communication Arts Major

With the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Russell and second by Ms. Whitaker, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

F. Information Item: Creation of “Department of Health Professions”

Ms. Sanford advised as to the creation of this new academic department. There were no questions, and this information item required no action by the Board.

As an additional piece of information, it was also noted that the decision to **drop the major in Physics** due to continued and irreversible low enrollment was shared in the previous day’s committee meeting. The Physics minor will remain as an academic option, classes will still be offered in the subject, and a plan is in place for the five students remaining in the major program to complete their degree requirements.

G. Resolution Endorsing the University of North Alabama’s Free Speech Compliance Report for Academic Year 2024-2025 Pursuant to Section 16-68-5 of the Code of Alabama

With the recommendation of the Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and upon motion by Mr. Pierce and second by Dr. Gunn, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

VII. ADVANCEMENT AND UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE MATTERS

As committee chair, Ms. Whitaker pointed out that the usual **“Update on UNA Foundation and University Endowments”** was on the agenda for the full Board at today’s meeting. This information item had been reviewed in the committee setting the previous day, the investments continue to do well in the current market, and there were no questions concerning these reports at today’s meeting.

Ms. Whitaker also highlighted topics covered in this committee’s June 12 meeting, including:

- \$11.8 million in gifts to date toward this year’s \$15 million fundraising goal
- 1,872 unique donors to date (from 43 states and 14 countries) toward this year’s 2,500 goal
- Total gifts to comprehensive campaign now over \$88 million
- UNA’s position as to state funding at the conclusion of the spring 2025 legislative session
- Town/gown initiatives and anticipation of planned safety improvements to the Pine Street corridor through campus (better lighting, reduction in traffic lanes, new sidewalks, etc.)

VIII. CAMPUS LIFE AND ATHLETICS COMMITTEE MATTERS

As committee chair, Mr. Pierce noted that **“Preview of Fall Campus Housing Options and Occupancy Levels”** was on the agenda for the full Board at today’s meeting. This information item had been reviewed in the committee setting the previous day, and there were no questions concerning this at today’s meeting.

Mr. Pierce also reported on additional topics covered during this committee’s June 12 meeting. These included:

- SGA accomplishments last year
- Continued work on elements of the institutional strategic plan
- Stadium construction update
- Student-athletes’ academic achievements and 4,000+ hours of community service
- Plans to alter our position in the *House vs. NCAA* settlement based on the judge’s June 6 ruling that changed circumstances to be very favorable for UNA (will opt in during 2025-2026 rather than delay to 2026-2027)

Trustees Abroms, Page, Sanford, and Trapp all made comments on the impressiveness of Bank Independent Stadium as it continues under construction. They noted how the addition of this significant campus amenity is a sign of great change that will benefit both UNA and the greater Shoals community, will be an economic impact driver, and will be a source of great pride and enjoyment for the student body.

IX. FINANCE, FACILITIES, AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MATTERS

As committee chair, Mr. Abroms reported on topics covered in this committee's June 12 meeting. On the agenda today for the full Board were:

A. Review of Financial Information for Quarter Ending March 31, 2025

Revenues are on track and expenditures are in line as would be expected for the first quarter of the fiscal year. The quarterly financial report was thoroughly reviewed in the committee setting. There were no questions, and this information item required no action by the Board.

B. Resolution Approving Proposed University Tuition and Fees for the 2025-2026 Academic Year

In his summary comments, Mr. Abroms pointed out that the differentiated tuition model is working well, and the Board will always strive to keep the cost of tuition affordable at UNA. No tuition increases are proposed for the coming academic year, and the increases in the college instructional fees are modest. With the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, and Personnel Committee and upon motion by Mr. Russell and second by Ms. Whitaker, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

C. Resolution Authorizing Expenditures

Mr. Abroms provided summary comments about the six expenditure items covered in this resolution, and with the recommendation of the Finance, Facilities, and Personnel Committee, moved for approval of the resolution. Dr. Gunn seconded the motion. There was additional discussion about the plans for parking expansion near the Waterloo Road/Cedar Street intersection that should add 150-200 new parking spaces less than ¼ mile from the center of campus, and about the long-sought safety improvements to the Pine Street corridor through campus. With no further discussion, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

D. Information Items

Mr. Abroms noted three additional items brought forward by the Committee, none of which required any action by the Board:

- (1) 2023-2024 Audit Report** – This latest financial audit conducted by the State Examiners of Public Accounts is posted on the UNA website.
- (2) Public Posting of Financial Disclosure Information** – This information item is provided in the meeting materials as a part of each June agenda.
- (3) Special Voluntary Retirement Incentive Update** – The level of savings realized to date indicates that this incentive program is financially responsible and is working according to plan.

X. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Resolution Recognizing the 250th Birthday of the United States Army and its Military Connections to the University of North Alabama

Following introductory comments by Mr. Trapp, upon motion by Ms. Sanford and second by Mr. Page, the resolution was approved by unanimous vote.

B. Trustees Annual Reaffirmation of Acknowledgement of Fiduciary Duties

This is a standing item on each June meeting agenda. 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.)*

XI. MOTION FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Trapp noted that an executive session was needed to hear updates on pending legal matters. 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, and Ms. Fite-Morgan provided a written opinion to that effect to Mr. Trapp and Dr. Kitts prior to today's meeting. Upon motion by Mr. Russell, second by Ms. Whitaker, and a unanimous vote, the meeting recessed at 10:26 a.m. for a short break and to enter into executive session. At approximately 10:40, the Board entered into executive session. Ms. Fite-Morgan, Mr. Haslam, Dr. Looney, Mr. Thornton, and Ms. Berry remained in the room with Dr. Kitts and the Board during this closed session.

The Board reconvened in regular session at 11:20 a.m., and Mr. Trapp advised that the Board had no 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 Dr. Gunn, second by Mr. Abrams, and a unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Approved September 12, 2025



President Pro Tempore



Secretary