

Athens State University
Board of Trustees
External Affairs Committee
Minutes
February 9, 2024, 1:15 pm
Founders Hall Chapel

Call of Order - Ms. Missy Ming Smith, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:17 pm.

Roll Call - Ms. Brandy Conway conducted a roll call. Members absent: Darren Waldrep, Yvette Evans, Betty Ruth-Oliver. A quorum was present.

October 20, 2023 Minutes - Ms. Missy Ming Smith presented the minutes. Motion to approve by Mr. Mike Underwood. 2nd – Ms. Missy Ming Smith.

Updates

- **Capital Campaign Update** - Ms. Brandy Conway presented the update on the capital campaign that ran from 2017-2022. Gifts were \$3,498,891; pledges were \$8,342,624; federal grants were \$6,056,942; state grants were \$7,323,882 for a total of \$25,222,339. The goal was \$20 million. In 2023, \$32,588.94 of pledges were fulfilled. Outstanding pledges are planned gifts.
- **Vendor Partner Update** - Ms. Brandy Conway provided an update on the vendor partner project. David Brown received a list of 839 vendors that the University has paid. The list was narrowed down to 65 vendors after removing non-profit agencies, faculty, and staff. Eighteen vendors have been identified as those who currently support the University. The list will be provided to the committee. Mr. Ken Lones asked that he be contacted for guidance and thoughts on how to create a plan to contact the vendors. Ms. Missy Ming Smith made mention of UAH's giving page and how they list their donors and partners. Mr. David Brown will provide additional information regarding the report and how long the company has been a vendor of the University's.
- **Government Relations** - Ms. Brandy Conway reported that the legislative session began on Tuesday, February 6. Our current state funding appropriations for operations and maintenance were \$20,487,367 (October 2023 – September 2024). The requested amount for October 2024 – September 2025 was \$22,725,338. The Governor's budget recommendation is \$21,741,509. An increase of \$1,254,142 or 11%. This is a shortfall of \$983,829 of our requested budget amount. We will begin working with our legislative delegation to get more funding. There is a bill for advancement and technology funding and supplemental funding. If it passes, we could receive an additional \$7,213,212. The committee requested a list of legislators that currently have a relationship with Athens State and a list of those we would like to enhance.

- **Learning Partnerships** - Ms. Brandy Conway reported that we currently have 38 learning partners. Eight new partners have been signed since the last meeting. There are 8 new prospects currently in the pipeline. In Spring 2023, total credit hours were 155 from students enrolled through the learning partnership. In Spring 2024, total credit hours were 847. This is an increase of 446.5%. Spring 2023, net tuition and fees were \$48,948. Spring 2024, net tuition and fees were \$248,698. This is an increase of 408%. In Spring 2024, 96 students enrolled through this partnership. We have employees from 20 companies participating, with Huntsville Hospital System as our largest with 40 students. We also have one new student, and one returning student enrolled through the Amazon Career Choice program.
- **LaunchBox** - Ms. Brandy Conway reported that interviews for the Director position have begun.
- **Marketing** - Mr. Chris Latham reported that we have entered into a year contract with Up & Up for our enrollment strategy. The contract expires October 2024. We are currently in the research and discovery stage. Year two of the agreement will be marketing only. Up & Up created personas (students we want to target when placing advertising) based on a survey of 4,000 people in Alabama, Tennessee, and surrounding states. Advertising will begin in late March/early April. We will need to go through two enrollment cycles to see results. The goal is to have 5,000 students over five years. We will be able to track the most successful avenues. The committee asked to share the strategies for each persona at the next meeting. Mr. Latham reported that in the Spring 2024, we received 773 applications. Of those the breakdown of how a student chose Athens State is as follows: Friend/Family – 234 (30.27%); Web Search/Website – 164 (21.22%); Alumni – 118 (15.27%); Community College – 79 (10.22%); Advertisement – 35 (4.53%); Current Student – 35 (4.53%); Athens State Employee – 24 (3.1%); Employer – 15 (1.94%); Live Nearby – 10 (1.29%); Employer/Learning Partner – 9 (1.16%)(1 from Amazon, 3 from Huntsville Hospital, others just stated “work”).
- **Alumni Association** – Dr. Rachel O’Sullivan introduced the new Director of Alumni Affairs, Denise Santos. Dr. O’Sullivan reported that membership in 2022 was \$2,725. In 2023, they were \$3,470. The Listerhill Credit Union associational membership is \$25,000-\$30,000 annually. The committee would like to evaluate no alumni fees for graduates. Ms. Smith requested Ms. Santos share ideas on how to cultivate relationships with current students.

New Business – no new business was discussed.

Adjourn - Ms. Missy Ming Smith called the meeting to end at 2:21 pm.