

## **SUMMARY OF JULY 17, 2020 MEETING OF THE ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**Important Notice:** Per the directive of Chairman Ronnie Chronister, the regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Athens State University will be at **2:30 pm on July 17, 2020, in Founders Hall Chapel** located at 300 North Beaty Street, Athens, AL, and it will be conducted pursuant to Section 3 of Governor Kay Ivey's March 18, 2020 Proclamation concerning the operation of the Open Meetings Law during the state of emergency related to COVID-19. As such, all deliberations conducted, and actions taken, during the meeting will be limited to matters within the Board of Trustees's statutory authority that are (a) necessary to respond to COVID-19, or (b) necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the Board of Trustees. As such, some members of the Board of Trustees may physically attend the meeting, and other members of the board may participate in this meeting by means of electronic communications. Additionally, **the meeting will not be open to physical presence by members of the general public.** However, no less than twelve (12) hours after the meeting, the board will post a summary of the meeting on its website at: <https://www.athens.edu/board-of-trustees/meetings/minutes/> . The summary will recount the deliberations conducted and the actions taken by the board with reasonable specificity to allow the public to understand what happened at the meeting. For the July 17<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees meeting, there will not be a luncheon, and there will not be an opportunity for public comment.

One member of the board (Chairman Ronnie Chronister) physically attended the meeting at Founders Hall Chapel, and other members of the board participated in this meeting by means of electronic communications (through a telephone/Zoom conference call). Per the Governor's Order, the meeting was not open to physical presence by members of the general public.

This summary of the meeting is provided no less than twelve (12) hours after the meeting, on the Athens State University website at <https://www.athens.edu/board-of-trustees/meetings/minutes/> The summary recounts the deliberations conducted and the actions taken by the board with reasonable specificity to allow the public to understand what happened.

### **I. Call to Order**

Chairman Ronnie Chronister, who was physically present at the Founders Hall Chapel, called the meeting to Order at 2:43 pm.

The following board members participated in the meeting remotely via telephone/Zoom conference call: Jim America, Crystal Brown, Cathy Dickens, Bill

Dunnavant, Macke Mauldin, Senator Arthur Orr, Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried and Missy Ming Smith. Governor Kay Ivey and Mr. Jimmy Baker were absent.

Also participating remotely via telephone/Zoom were Dr. Kim LaFevor, Dean for the College of Business and Dr. Stephen Spencer, Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences. They participated at the request of Chairman Chronister, having been identified as necessary to the expected discussion and business of the meeting.

The following persons were physically present with Chairman Chronister, at his request, their participation having been identified as necessary to the expected discussion and business of the meeting: Philip Way, President; Jackie Gooch, Special Assistant to the President for Board Relations; Dr. Joe Delap, Provost; Mr. Mike McCoy, Vice President for Financial Affairs; and Mr. Shane Black, University Legal Counsel.

## **II. Approval of Agenda and Manner for Conducting Meeting**

Chairman Chronister asked for motion to: (a) approve the July 17, 2020 agenda; (b) find that all items on the agenda (and all deliberations related thereto) are matters within the Athens State University Board of Trustee's statutory authority that are (i) necessary to respond to COVID-19, or (ii) necessary to perform essential minimum functions of the board; (c) approve the conduct of the meeting pursuant to the Section 3 of Governor Kay Ivey's March 18, 2020 Proclamation concerning the operation of the Open Meetings Law during the state of emergency related to COVID-19; and (d) to suspend, for this meeting, any by-law, policy or other rule of the board that would conflict with the conduct of the meeting as stated in this motion and the July 17, 2020 agenda. On a motion by Mr. Mauldin and seconded by Dr. Sims-deGraffenried, the motion was introduced, seconded, and then approved by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – Y

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

## **III. Public Comment – Suspended**

#### **IV. Roll Call**

The Secretary to the Board called roll. Individuals answering present were:

Members present (electronically and physically) constituted a quorum to conduct business.

Jim America  
Crystal Brown  
Ronnie Chronister  
Cathy Dickens  
Bill Dunnavant  
Macke Mauldin  
Senator Arthur Orr  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried  
Missy Ming Smith

#### **V. Approval of Minutes –May 15, 2020**

On a motion by Ms. Brown and seconded by Dr. Sims-deGraffenried, the Board approved the May 15, 2020 minutes as presented by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – Y

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

#### **VI. Old Business, Pending Motions and Resolutions**

None.

#### **VII. New Business, Pending Motions and Resolutions**

**1. AY 2019-2020 Budget Amendment #2 (Attachment A)**

Chairman Chronister asked Mr. McCoy to provide background for this request.

Mr. McCoy stated this amendment was necessary due to additional funding the University obtained from the award of the Title III grant and from the federally funded CARES Act along with the funds from the State Advancement and Technology and Education Trust Fund Supplemental funds.

On a motion by Dr. Sims-deGraffenried and seconded by Mr. Mauldin, the Board approved the AY 2019-2020 Budget Amendment #2 as presented. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote:

It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the attached AY 2019-2020 Budget Amendment #2:

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – Y

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

**2. AY 2020-2021 Budget (Attachment B)**

Chairman Chronister asked Mr. McCoy to provide background for this request.

Mr. McCoy explained that the 2020-2021 budget presented was based on current tuition rates and current year actual credit hour production. The slight increase in the budget is due to increased state appropriations. This budget indicates an 8% increase in operating expenses and a 4% increase in salary and benefits.

On a motion by Mr. Mauldin (following confirmation that the Finance and Facilities Committee had reviewed the budget closely), the Board approved the AY 2020-2021 Budget as presented. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the AY 2020-2021 Budget.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y

Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – Y

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

Following the vote, Mr. Chronister reminded the Board that Dr. Way was given a mandate by the Board to review academic programs and determine what programs needed to continue and what programs did not need to be continued as well as developing new programs. Mr. Chronister stated that Dr. Way is on that path and we must be judicious with our resources and innovative in how we deliver programs. The Board must continue to look at resources, return on investment and people. The Board has been looking at the budget from a tactical standpoint but will have to have more strategic discussions over the next few board meetings.

Dr. Sims-deGraffenried commended Dr. Way and his administrative team on the way they have handled COVID crisis. Mr. Chronister heartily agreed and expressed his view that during these difficult times, good leadership and bad leadership become evident.

### **3. Physical Plant Improvement Plan: Sandridge Student Center Maintenance (Attachment C)**

Chairman Chronister asked Mr. McCoy to provide background for this request.

Mr. McCoy communicated that over the last 9 months, the University has been in discussions about the much needed exterior renovations to the Sandridge Student Center. The extensive exterior renovations are needed so that the newly completed interior renovations are not ruined with water/moisture leaks. The exterior renovations include window replacement, replacement of coping around the top of the building and a remote locking system.

In October 2019, the Board approved the University to submit a grant proposal to ACHE for the needed funds. That University did not receive the grant monies which now brings this request. Bids were solicited and none were received. Mr. McCoy negotiated with contractors and secured a favorable price (\$996,700) for the University from BCA, in Decatur. Mr. McCoy further explained that the 2020-2021 budget which the Board just approved, included \$500,000 advancement and technology funds that can be used toward this project, leaving approximately \$500,000 to be taken from plant funds.

Mr. Chronister clarified that the University had just spend \$1.7 million dollars on interior renovations for this building and if we do not renovate the exterior it will ruin the renovations we just completed. Mr. McCoy confirmed.

On a motion by Mr. America and seconded by Ms. Dickens, the Board approved the Physical Plant Improvement Plan for Sandridge Student Center Maintenance as presented. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the Physical Plant Improvement Plan for Sandridge Student Center Maintenance.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – no response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

#### **4. 2021 Board Meeting Dates (Attachment D)**

On a motion by Ms. Brown and seconded by Mr. Mauldin, the Board approved the 2021 Board meeting dates as presented. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the 2021 Board meeting dates.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

**5. New Academic Program Bachelor of Fine Arts (Attachment E)**

**College of Arts and Sciences**

Chairman Chronister asked Dr. Delap to provide background for this request.

Dr. Delap explained that this was a high demand degree. The University already has a BA in Arts for Art Education students and this would be an additional degree program for those students in studio art and graphic design.

Dr. Spencer also stated that this degree program will allow graduates to go into professional art positions or on to a graduate program. Various resources, including Burning Glass, were used to gather data about this degree program. This will be the only BFA within an hour drive of the Alabama Center for the Arts.

On a motion by Mr. Mauldin and seconded by Ms. Dickens, the Board approved the Bachelor of Fine Arts as presented. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the Bachelor of Fine Arts for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

**6. New Academic Program: Concentration in Intelligent Systems in B.S. in Computer Science Degree Program (Attachment F)**

**College of Arts and Sciences**

Chairman Chronister asked Dr. Delap to provide background for this request.

Dr. Delap explained that this was a high demand concentration and would be a great addition to the B.S. in Computer Science.

Dr. Spencer also stated that this concentration combines artificial intelligence and includes machine learning and robotics. This concentration will be very useful for

students in manufacturing environments. The College of Arts and Sciences is working with the College of Business to incorporate some of the courses within the business degree programs.

On a motion by Ms. Dickens and seconded by Dr. Sims-deGraffenried, the Board approved the Concentration in Intelligent Systems in B.S. in Computer Science Degree Program as presented. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the Concentration in Intelligent Systems in B.S. in Computer Science Degree Program for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

**7. New Academic Program: Certificate in Interactive Design (Attachment G)  
College of Arts and Sciences**

Dr. Delap explained that this was a 12-hour certificate allowing students to gain experience in user interface and user experiences.

Dr. Spencer also stated that this certificate has close connections to many career fields such as, multimedia production, design software, and video-camera editing. This will make the students more valuable in areas of production. This certificate was developed in close collaboration with Calhoun art faculty.

On a motion by Mr. America and seconded by Ms. Brown, the Board approved the Certificate in Interactive Design as presented. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the Certificate in Interactive Design for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y

Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

**8. New Academic Program: Certificate in Government Contract Accounting  
College of Business (Attachment H)**

Dr. Delap explained that this certificate needed no introduction. There is a high demand for government contract accounting in the area. Students will receive a valuable return on their investment in this certificate.

Dr. LaFevor further explained that this is a very specialized field and is a direct response to employer requests. The College of Business Board of Visitors has been working on this certificate for a while.

On a motion by Ms. Dickens and seconded by Mr. Mauldin, the Board approved the Certificate in Government Contract Accounting as presented. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the Certificate in Government Contract Accounting for the College of Business.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

**9. Election of Chair *Pro Tempore* for 2020-2022 (Attachment I)**

Chairman Chronister called for nominations for Chair *Pro Tempore*. Mr. Mauldin was nominated by Ms. Dickens. Hearing no other nominations, Chairman Chronister called for a motion.

On a motion by Ms. Dickens and seconded by Senator Orr, the Board elected Macke Mauldin as the Chair *Pro Tempore for 2020-2021*. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the Chair *Pro Tempore for 2020-2021*, Macke Mauldin.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – No response  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

#### **10. Election of Vice Chair *Pro Tempore for 2020-2022 (Attachment J)***

Chairman Chronister called for nominations for Vice Chair *Pro Tempore*. Missy Ming Smith was nominated by Mr. Mauldin. Hearing no other nominations, Chairman Chronister called for a motion.

On a motion by Mr. Mauldin and seconded by Dr. Sims-deGraffenried, the Board elected Missy Ming Smith as the Vice Chair *Pro Tempore for 2020-2021*. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he read the recommendation for action and called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees approve the Vice Chair *Pro Tempore for 2020-2021*, Missy Ming Smith.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnavant – No response  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

### **VIII. Other Business – No Action Required**

1. Financial Summary
2. SACSCOC Update

## IX. Report and Closing Comments of Board Members

- Board Committee Updates and Report Acceptance  
Finance and Facilities Committee – Mr. Chronister  
**Suspended** - Enrollment and Student Affairs Committee – Mr. Mauldin  
**Suspended** -Academic Affairs Committee – Ms. Brown  
**Suspended** -Development Committee – Ms. Dickens

Mr. Chronister reported that the Finance and Facilities committee did meet and discussed the three items that were on today's agenda. The committee unanimously recommended the items be forwarded to the Board for approval.

On a motion by Ms. Brown and seconded by Dr. Sims-deGraffenried, the Board accepted the Financial and Facilities Committee report. Chairman Chronister asked if there were further comments, and seeing none, he called for the roll-call vote: It is recommended that the Athens State University Board of Trustees accept the Financial and Facilities Committee Report.

Jim America – Y  
Crystal Brown – Y  
Ronnie Chronister – Y  
Cathy Dickens – Y  
Bill Dunnivant – Y  
Macke Mauldin – Y  
Senator Arthur Orr – Y  
Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y  
Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.

Chairman Chronister recognized Dr. Way for comments. Dr. Way thanked the Board members for their support and provided the following updates:

- Commencement will be held August 1<sup>st</sup> for spring and summer graduates respectful of all Alabama Department of Public Health protocols involving social distancing and face masks.
- Currently preparing for fall and making campus inviting. There will be on-line, blended and in-person classes

- There will be required testing for all students before they can return to campus. This testing will be free of charge to the student.
- Students will be required to use a self-screening app and present their status code at the campus entrance. If clear, they will receive a wrist band.
- Random testing, funded by the State, will be conducted during the fall semester on students and employees.
- Finalizing the new strategic plan.
- Engaging in a rebranding exercise that will include a re-vamp of the University website.
- SACSCOC compliance report due September 2020.
- Very exciting about new faculty and staff joining the University and we are continuing to move forward.

## **X. Adjourn**

On a motion made by Dr. Sims-deGraffenried and seconded by Ms. Dickens, the meeting adjourned at 3:33 pm by the following roll-call vote:

Jim America – Y

Crystal Brown – Y

Ronnie Chronister – Y

Cathy Dickens – Y

Bill Dunnavant – Y

Macke Mauldin – Y

Senator Arthur Orr – No response

Dr. Sandra Sims-deGraffenried – Y

Missy Ming Smith – No response

The vote was unanimous in approval of the motion.