

Agenda Item: I.C.

DATE: April 21, 2016

SUBJECT: University of Tennessee at Martin Master Plan Refinement

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Campus master plans are an essential element of higher education public policy. Master plans provide an opportunity for long range planning that incorporate the institution's needs and ambitions, while also providing the public and state government a sense for how the institution might evolve over time. Whether the acquisition of strategic property, the need for additional or more efficient use of facilities, or analysis of how the campus footprint meshes with the surrounding community, master plans provide a method of anticipating and preparing for the future needs of the campus and the students it serves. THEC encourages institutions to produce a master plan every five years that addresses near, mid and long-term needs of the campus with respect to building and land use, open space, vehicular circulation and parking, and land acquisition opportunities.

MASTER PLAN SUMMARY

In late 2010, the University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM) and Centric Architecture, an architecture firm, completed a master plan that addressed the long term needs of the campus with respect to academic facilities, student housing, parking, circulation, visual improvements and land acquisition. The 2010 Master Plan provided comprehensive recommendations to help the campus meet its mission to enhance the educational, cultural and economic life in Northwest Tennessee while also fostering an on-campus community for its students. Five years later, UTM and Centric Architecture convened a planning team, which consisted of campus and community stakeholders, to refine the 2010 Master Plan and provide specific recommendations on a 20-year horizon to help the campus realize that master plan's recommendations.

Since the adoption of the 2010 Master Plan, full-time equivalent enrollment has declined from 6,700 undergraduate students in Fall 2010 to 5,800 undergraduate students in Fall 2015. In light of this decline, the planning team sought to make the campus more attractive to students by enhancing the on-campus experience. The Master Plan Refinement is therefore guided by four principles: creating a robust on-campus community of students; improving the campus visual experience; reinforcing "town and gown" relationships; and branding and communicating the UTM experience.

The 2010 Master Plan's facility assessment concluded that four of the five space categories (Classrooms, Lab/Studio, Open Lab and Office) were considered deficient to meet campus need; the fifth, Research, was considered to be in surplus. The Master Plan Refinement recommends alleviating the space deficit by constructing one building to house the Engineering and Science program and another to meet additional academic needs. The two new buildings are positioned to help form a new quadrangle — adjacent to the historic quadrangle — reinforcing the pedestrian-friendly campus core.

To address the 2010 Master Plan's goal of fostering an on-campus community for UTM's students, the Master Plan Refinement recommends increasing the number of students who reside on campus (from 1,650 beds in Fall 2015 to 2,600 beds in Fall 2025). The refinement plans to construct a Student Commons Building and several student life pavilions across campus. Sections of Crisp Hall and Gooch Hall, two academic buildings, will also transform into student gathering spaces, inviting more students to engage with the historic quadrangle. The refinement also encourages further consolidation and development of Greek organization facilities in the south of campus in order to create a community that supports robust on-campus weekend experiences.

Finally, to distinguish and signify UTM's presence within the community, the Master Plan Refinement recommends construction of ceremonial gateways at campus entrances. Pedestrian entrances will also be marked by UTM branded pillars. The refinement intends for the gateways and pillars to provide a sense of arrival for students, faculty, staff and visitors.

RECOMMENDATION

The UTM Master Plan Refinement provides specific recommendations to help the university update and address the comprehensive recommendations provided in the 2010 Master Plan. It has been thoroughly reviewed and THEC staff recommends it for approval.