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MARTIN METHODIST, UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE SYSTEM ENTER INTO DISCUSSIONS

Signed letter of intent paves the way for Martin Methodist to possibly join UT System, pending approvals

PULASKI, Tenn. (Sept. 11, 2020) – Martin Methodist College and the University of Tennessee System signed a nonbinding letter of intent today, the first step in discussions for the small, 150-year-old, private college to join the UT System.

Leaders of the two schools are exploring the possibility of entering into an agreement, which is subject to approval by the boards of trustees at both institutions, the Tennessee state legislature, and regional accreditor Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

The partnership would provide additional opportunities for southern Middle Tennessee families, who would have access to more undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as more affordable tuition.

“Martin Methodist is in good shape, but the pandemic has accelerated conversations about the future across the higher-education system,” Martin Methodist President Mark La Branche said. “The trustees and I had been talking about sustainability for a long time. When presented with the opportunity to expand the breadth and quality of our mission, the trustees were eager to explore.”

If approved, Martin Methodist would become the fourth undergraduate college within the UT System, and the first new campus since UT Chattanooga joined more than 50 years ago. Established in 1870, Martin Methodist College is the only four-year and graduate institution of higher education between Sewanee in the east and Freed-Hardeman in the west, serving a southern Middle Tennessee region of 13 counties near the Alabama border.

The UT System annually enrolls about 50,000 undergraduate and graduate students statewide, and more than 11,000 students graduate from UT campuses with bachelor’s, master’s, doctoral and professional degrees. It represents more than 400,000 alumni around the world.

“We are always looking to expand educational opportunities for Tennesseans,” UT President Randy Boyd said. “Martin Methodist is a historic institution that for 150 years has provided opportunities and excellence to Tennesseans in critical areas such as nursing, education, criminal justice, social services and business. Its graduates are vital to the long-term economic success of the region.”

The letter of intent formalizes the commitment of both parties to discuss the possible transfer of Martin Methodist’s assets to the UT System, where they would be governed by the UT Board of Trustees and become a financial responsibility of the state of Tennessee. Martin Methodist would become a new campus of UT and continue to offer professional and pre-professional preparation that is accessible and affordable with the personal attention of a small campus.

About the UT System

The University of Tennessee System is comprised of campuses at Knoxville, Chattanooga, and Martin; the Health Science Center at Memphis; the Space Institute at Tullahoma; and the statewide Institute of Agriculture and Institute for Public Service.

The UT System has a presence in each of Tennessee’s 95 counties. Through the combined force of education, research and outreach, the University serves students, business and industry, schools, governments, organizations and citizens statewide.

About Martin Methodist College

Martin Methodist College, founded in 1870, is a private, liberal arts college affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Martin Methodist offers baccalaureate degrees in 39 programs of study that include English, religious studies, music and dramatic arts, mathematics, and natural sciences to business, social sciences, education, criminal justice and nursing.