**NEWS**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 14, 2023

CONTACT: Bud Grimes, Office of University Relations

CAVALIER DISCUSSES HIS APPOINTMENT AS UT MARTIN INTERIM CHANCELLOR

MARTIN, Tenn. – Dr. Philip Acree Cavalier is accustomed to serving as a university administrator, but his newest position came as a bit of a surprise. He received an early morning call from University of Tennessee System President Randy Boyd on Jan. 26 asking if Cavalier would serve as UT Martin interim chancellor. Later that same morning, Dr. Keith Carver, who had begun his seventh year as UT Martin chancellor, was announced as the new leader for the UT Institute of Agriculture. Cavalier would be taking over the reins of the university from a highly popular chancellor.

Fast forward to March 1, his official first day as interim chancellor, and life has changed significantly for UT Martin’s former chief academic officer. Cavalier has appointed his interim successor in Dr. Stephanie Kolitsch, completed a scheduled accreditation visit by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and quickly settled into the role of leading a primary regional university in the UT System. He responded to questions about his new post and his plans for leading the university until a permanent successor for Carver is named.

**• What went through your mind when President Boyd contacted you Jan. 26?** “I was certainly surprised, and it was sad. Working with Keith Carver has been just such a joy and a delight for the last five years, and he's meant so much to this campus. I didn't know that this was going to happen, but I appreciate President Boyd having the faith in me to be able to manage this transition.”

(more)

CAVALIER, PAGE 2

**• You’ve served as UT Martin’s chief academic officer since 2018. How has that role prepared you to serve as interim chancellor?** “I think that during that time, I've gotten to know the people on this campus and at the regional centers. I’ve worked very closely with the faculty, and I think that's a very important piece of it. The second thing I think is over that time, I've been involved in all of the planning work that we've done to set the course for the next five years. So, I feel like being in the middle of that has helped me to say, ‘Okay, at the core, how can I help UTM to achieve the goals of the plans?’”

**• What are a couple of your proudest accomplishments in your previous UT Martin position?** “I think the first one is we've got a sense of what we're going to do with new programs and enrollment to make sure we grow, and that has been important obviously after COVID. I would say that we've increased and improved our ability to use data when we're making decisions. We've got an outstanding director of institutional research. We've got a director of retention who is fantastic and has been able to come to work every day and ask, ‘How do we help students succeed and persist?’ I think those things are critical to the health of this institution.”

**• What are some of your main goals as interim chancellor?** “I think, first, to continue doing the work that we've started doing this semester and before that. We just had our updated Strategic Plan approved by the UT Board of Trustees, and it has some very clear recommendations that we're going to pursue. I think it's important that whoever the permanent chancellor is can see that UTM is moving forward and in good health. I want to make sure that I’m contributing to that every day. I think also there are folks in our community who are still grieving about the fact that Chancellor Carver is no longer in Martin, and I’m one of them. It’s just going to take some time, and I want to be part of helping folks who are in that spot to feel better about what’s happening even though Chancellor Carver’s gone.”

(more)

CAVALIER, PAGE 3

**• How can people best support you at interim chancellor?** “I think first and foremost, continuing to do the work that we've done. So, if you've been a part of a committee that's been formed to work on a particular piece of the Strategic Plan, continue to be all in on that. Recognize that we've got some opportunities here that we really need to pursue as a result of Blue Oval City and Ford. Let’s keep trying to improve the institution even though the tendency might be, ‘Well, we need to stick it in neutral and just sit where we are.’”

**• Who are the important people in your life who are supporting you away from the university?** “My wife, Carol, is the most important person, and she has been extremely supportive in all of this. She, too, was surprised, and of course, my whole family loves Keith Carver. My boys have enjoyed spending time with him. We're an empty nest family now: one son is in California, one is in Washington, D.C., and the third is a sophomore in college outside of Philadelphia. It’s hard to be so far away from them, but we stay in touch with Snapchat and Facetime.”

**• You were a college athlete during your undergraduate years. How did that experience shape you into the person and professional you are today?** “I was a goalie in lacrosse and soccer in college, and that position is one where there's tremendous pressure at certain moments to perform. I think that's similar to university administration. You have to make sure that you’re performing well all the time but especially in key moments. The experiences I had playing sports and specifically that position gave me confidence that I can do that. I cherish the experiences that I had playing sports in college, and I think student athletes have a wonderful extra part of their college experience that they will remember always.”

###