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Interim UT Martin Chancellor Appointment

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Interim UT Martin Chancellor Appointment

Since Dr. Tom Rakes' announcement in April that he would step down as UT Martin chancellor on May 31 to return to teaching, I have visited with members of the UT Martin campus community and given careful consideration to the campus' needs during its transition to new leadership. I am pleased to be able to announce that Dr. Robert M. Smith will serve as interim UT Martin chancellor, effective June 1.

On May 1, I will travel to UT Martin, along with Dr. Smith and his wife, Ramona, to announce his appointment and present him to the campus community.

As provost and then president of Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania from 1999 to 2012, Dr. Smith led nationally recognized, award-winning innovations in enrollment management, improving retention and graduation rates, and strengthening academic quality. Prior to that, he was dean of the UT Martin College of Arts and Sciences. While Dr. Smith held that post from 1987 to 1999, he also co-established and was the first executive director of the WestStar Leadership Program from 1989 to 1999.

After Dr. Smith retired in 2012 from Slippery Rock University, which named him president emeritus, he returned to Tennessee as a resident of Franklin. Since then, he has been a consultant and member of the Education Leadership Council for Witt/Kieffer executive search firm, which specializes in higher education and healthcare. In 2014, he also began consulting as an associate with the AACSCU-Penson Center for Professional Development, a resource of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

I am grateful to Dr. Rakes for his service to UT Martin as chancellor since 2007 and as provost for five years prior to that, and that he is willing to continue serving as a member of the faculty. I'm also pleased that a leader and higher education expert of Dr. Smith's caliber and one with such significant ties to UT Martin is returning to guide the university through this transition.

Please join me in thanking Dr. Rakes for his previous and continued service, and help me welcome Dr. Smith back to UT Martin as interim chancellor.

All the best,
Joe

[The University of Tennessee](#) | [Office of the President](#)

831 Andy Holt Tower | Knoxville, TN 37996

Phone: 865.974.2241 | Fax: 865.974.3753



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