

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT LIFE, AND ATHLETICS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

The Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, in the Miller Education Center Meeting Room at Middle Tennessee State University.

Call to Order

Committee Chair Pam Wright called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Board Secretary James Floyd called the roll. The following Committee members were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Tom Boyd, Pete DeLay, Bill Jones, Mary Martin, Steve Smith, Christine Vanek, Pam Wright, Molly Mihm, and Keith Huber. A quorum was declared.

President Sidney A. McPhee; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; Mark Byrnes, Provost; Yvette Clark, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Sarah Sudak, Interim Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; Diane Snodgrass, Interim Chief Audit Executive; James Floyd, University Counsel and Board Secretary; and Kim Edgar, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes - Action

The first agenda item was approval of the minutes from the May 23, 2023, Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee meeting. Trustee Vanek moved to approve the minutes from the May 23, 2023, meeting, and Trustee DeLay seconded the motion.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

Approval of Academic Department Merger - Action

Provost Byrnes requested approval to merge the Department of Global Studies and Human Geography and the Department of Political Science and International Relations for organizational efficiency. The new department will be called Political and Global Affairs starting in May 2024.

Trustee Delay moved to approve the merger, and Trustee Vanek seconded the motion.

During the discussion, Chairman Smith asked about the efficiencies achieved with the merger. President McPhee noted that we reduced the budget by \$5M this year by looking for efficiencies.

Trustee Wright mentioned that annual updates for new programs were discussed at the last meeting, but we understand that THEC is reformatting that reporting, so it will be provided at a future meeting.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve merging the academic departments of Global Studies and Human Geography and Political Science and International Relations passed unanimously.

Old Business – Tenure among Locally Governed Institutions

At the May meeting, Chairman Smith asked for data on the percentage of full-time faculty who are tenured for each locally governed institution. Provost Byrnes distributed a chart showing a range of 40.68% to 59.09%. Of our full-time faculty, 55% are tenured, which provides a steady group to engage in shared governance that cannot be accomplished by contingent faculty. President McPhee noted that we do not grant tenure to everyone who applies.

Chairman Smith asked about the benefits package that comes with tenure. Provost Byrnes responded that there are no financial benefits that come with tenure. Tenure provides academic freedom to pursue research and teaching.

Alan Thomas confirmed all state employees have a benefit package including a funded pension plan that is reviewed every three years.

Enrollment Report – Information Item

Interim Vice Provost for Enrollment Services Laurie Witherow shared that as of that morning, there was a 12% increase in new freshmen applications and a 12% increase in enrolled freshmen. We are still enrolling freshmen and transfer students. Much work is to be done. The census date is September 10, 2023, when data is reported to the state.

President McPhee appreciated the positive report and the work done by staff, faculty, and department chairs to recruit and improve yield.

Trustee Boyd asked if freshmen are up and transfers are flat, does this mean we had more seniors graduating than freshmen coming in? President McPhee agreed and noted that we graduated many in the last year resulting in an increase in our graduation rate.

Athletics Report - Information

Deputy Athletics Director Lee De Leon showed the final rendering of the Student-Athlete Enhancement Center. He then gave an overview of 2022-23 Athletics accomplishments. MTSU registered an NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR) of 94. MTSU finished 96th overall in the Learfield Director's Cup, top ranking in Conference USA with four Conference USA championships.

The Build Blue Campaign received \$3M from SRM Concrete recently and surpassed the \$20M goal. The new goal is \$25M. Trustee DeLay highlighted the large gifts and their importance to the University and offered thanks to the donors.

Adjournment

Committee Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee