

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MINUTES**

The Middle Tennessee State University Board of Trustees met on June 20, 2023, in the Miller Education Center Meeting Room at Middle Tennessee State University.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Board Chair Steve Smith called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Keith Huber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Introduction of Student Veteran**

Gen. Huber introduced Air Force Veteran, Staff Sergeant Clinton Gregory, who served for six years on active duty as a member of the special police where was military working dog handler. In this role, he performed considerable work with the Secret Service, DEA, and Homeland Security for distinguished visitors and special events protection. In 2019, Mr. Gregory left the Air Force and enrolled at MTSU in the aerospace program. He plans to graduate in December with a Bachelor of Science in aerospace with a professional pilot concentration. Mr. Gregory thanked MTSU for its support of veterans and spoke of the transition from the regimented military life to the structure that veterans must establish on their own. He praised the Charlie Daniels Center for the assistance it provides him and his fellow veterans.

**Recognition of the Equestrian and Stock Horse Teams**

Chairman Smith recognized Coach Ariel Higgins and members of the Equestrian Team and Coach Andrea Rego and members of the MTSU Stock Horse Team for their accomplishments. The Equestrian Team competes on the flat, over fences, Western horsemanship, riding and reining. Over the years, the Equestrian Team has over twenty (20) individual national champions and this year won the coveted Western National Championship trophy at the 2023 Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association National Championship for the first time. The Stock

Horse Team is a sports club organization that competes in and hosts collegiate, youth, and amateur ranch horse competitions. Disciplines include ranch trail, ranch riding, and ranch reining classes. They are two-time DII national champions, one-time DI national champions, one-time DI reserve national champions, and three-time DII reserve national champions. President McPhee joined in offering congratulations to both teams.

### **Resolution**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and President McPhee, Chairman Smith shared a tribute to the late Joey Jacobs. Chairman Smith expressed that Joey was a distinguished executive, with a vast array of accolades and accomplishments, earned during his more than 45-year involvement in Nashville's dynamic and expansive health care community. More importantly, Joey was a devoted husband, father and grandfather, considering his family to be his greatest success.

Joey was born on June 30, 1953, in the small, rural community of Morrison, TN, as the third child of Carl and Muriel Casey Jacobs. Growing up with his siblings; Douglas, Mike and Abbe, in Warren County, Joey developed a pride and love for his hometown, staying connected throughout his life and spending countless hours on his farm, instilling a love for the land and livestock with his grandchildren. Joey enrolled at Middle Tennessee State University where he pursued a Bachelor's degree in Accounting and graduated in 1975. The following year he married Debbie, the love of his life, and began his family, where they raised two sons, Brent and Scott. Brent and his wife Katie expanded the Jacobs family tree with three children, Emmaline, Joey Kate and Hunt, who loved joining their grandfather on adventures at the family farm.

Following graduation, Joey began his professional career in the health care industry when he joined Hospital Corporation of America (HCA), one of America's leading providers of health care services. For the next 21 years, he served the company in variety of roles, ultimately serving as President of HCA's Tennessee division, where he was responsible for the company's operations, including four psychiatric hospitals. A meeting with long-time health care industry icon, Clayton

McWhorter, encouraged Joey's entrepreneurial nature to join in founding Psychiatric Solutions, Inc., where he served as President, CEO and Chairman. Under Joey's leadership, the company grew to a more than \$2 billion business before being acquired by United Health Services. Not one to sit on the sidelines, Joey joined Acadia Healthcare, serving as Chairman and CEO until his retirement. Following his time at Acadia, Joey was elected to the Board of Directors of Cumberland Pharmaceuticals, where he served as Lead Independent Director and Chair of the Board's Governance and Nominating Committee.

A recipient of many University honors and awards, including the Champion of Free Enterprise Award from the College of Business, Joey was a dedicated alumnus of his alma mater. At MTSU, he served in a variety of volunteer roles and responsibilities, including the MTSU Foundation Board of Trustees, the Blue Raider Athletic Association and the Jennings A. Jones College of Business Dean's Advisory Council. In 2016, Governor Bill Haslam selected him to serve on the inaugural Board of Trustees for Middle Tennessee State University. Deeply committed to seeing his alma mater fulfill its potential, Joey's leadership was instrumental in the University's highly successful, \$105 million, Centennial Campaign. His philanthropic support enhanced and expanded programs across campus from Athletics to the College of Business, where he established the Joey A. Jacobs Chair of Excellence in Accounting.

His commitment to his community was broad, as he was actively involved as a board member of the Monroe Carrell, Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt, served as Chair of the Nashville Health Care Council, was a director for both the Federation of American Hospitals and the National Association of Psychiatric Health Systems. He also was a minority owner of the Nashville Predators.

With all his personal and professional success, Joey considered himself a "county boy that done good." His traditional values and his commitment to family and community are the cornerstones of Joey's remarkable life and career. Middle Tennessee State University is better because of his outstanding dedication, commitment, and support.

### **Roll Call**

Board Secretary James Floyd called the roll. The following trustees were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Tom Boyd, Drew Carpenter, Rick Cottle, Pete DeLay, Bill Jones, Stephen Smith, Chris Karbowskiak, and Pam Wright. A quorum was declared.

President Sidney A. McPhee; Mark Byrnes, University Provost; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; Yvette Clark, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Deb Sells, Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment and Academic Services; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; James Floyd, University Counsel and Board Secretary; and Kim Edgar, Executive Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, were also in attendance.

### **Approval of April 4, 2023, Meeting Minutes – Action**

Trustee Delay made the motion to approve the minutes from the April 4, 2023, meeting, and Vice Chair Karbowskiak seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Committee Report: Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics**

Committee Chair Pam Wright reported that the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on May 23, 2023. The Committee approved the minutes from the March 14, 2023, meeting. The Committee report contained two action items, which were unanimously approved for the Board's consideration. Information items included a report on applications and enrollment activity, a Faculty Senate presentation, a presentation by Student Trustee Carpenter, and an Athletics update. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and are contained in the Board notebooks.

### **Tenure and Promotion Candidates – Action**

Provost Byrnes reported to the Committee that faculty members applied for tenure and/or promotion in September 2022. They have been reviewed by their department chair/school director, department/school committee, college committee, college dean, provost, and president as stipulated by MTSU Policies 204 Tenure and 205 Promotion of Tenured and Tenurable Faculty along with their respective college and department policies. The president and university provost recommended that these faculty be granted tenure and/or promotion effective August 1, 2023. The Committee unanimously approved the thirty-five (35) candidates recommended for tenure and sixty-seven (67) candidates for promotion.

### **Academic Degree Program, Bachelor of Science in Cybersecurity Management – Action**

In accordance with MTSU Policy 251 Approval of Academic Programs, Units, and Modifications, all academic actions that require review and approval by THEC must be approved by the Board of Trustees. The Committee unanimously approved the new degree program.

### **Motion**

Trustee Wright made the motion to approve the action items recommended by the Committee and Trustee Boyd seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the action items carried unanimously.

### **Committee Report: Audit and Compliance Committee**

Committee Chair Tom Boyd reported that the Audit and Compliance Committee met on May 23, 2023. The Committee approved the minutes from its March 14, 2023, meeting. The Committee report contained no action items. Information items presented included a report on Independence of Chief Audit Executive; results of External Reviews: Tennessee Division of Claims and Risk Management Letter Report issued April 11, 2023; and the quarterly report – results of internal audit reports.

The public meeting of the Committee was adjourned, and the Committee went into executive session to discuss audits and investigations.

Materials outlining this information were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and are contained in the Board notebooks.

**Committee Report: Finance and Personnel Committee**

Trustee DeLay reported that the Finance and Personnel Committee met on May 23, 2023. The Committee approved the minutes from its March 14, 2023, meeting. The Committee report contained eight action items, which were unanimously approved for consideration by the Board. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

**Approval of Revisions to Policy 641 Student Fees, Incidental Charges, and Refunds – Action**

Revisions to Policy 641 included a change in the calculation of the Regional Scholars Program tuition rate and a change in the applicability of the eRate. The Committee unanimously approved the revisions to Policy 641.

**Capital Outlay Project Submittal – Action**

Bill Waits, Assistant Vice President for Campus Planning, presented the proposed MTSU capital outlay request for FY 2024-2025, which includes the new academic building project that will provide academic classrooms, class labs, faculty and staff offices, and support space for selected Liberal Arts departments and the associated Center for Innovation and Leadership, History Museum, and MTSU archives and exhibit spaces. The Committee unanimously approved the proposed capital outlay request for FY 2024-25.

**Capital Disclosures – Action**

Mr. Waits also presented plans to submit five projects as part of the 2024-20254 Capital Budget Request, which includes a public-private partnership for Student Housing, Student-Athlete

Enhancement Center Addition, EV Charging Stations, New Parking Structure, and a renovation to the Student Recreation Center. The Committee unanimously approved the recommended capital disclosures.

#### **Capital Maintenance Projects Submittal – Action**

Joe Whitefield, Assistant Vice President for Facilities Services, presented the request submittal to THEC which includes capital maintenance requests for thirteen projects for FY 2024-2025 totaling \$17,400,000.00 and a summary of capital maintenance project requests for an additional four years, FY 2025-2026 through FY 2028-2029. The Committee unanimously approved the capital maintenance projects submittal.

#### **Approval of Proposed Tuition, Fees, and Housing Rates – Action**

Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance, presented this report. For 2023-2024, THEC approved binding ranges for undergraduate in-state tuition and the combined undergraduate in-state tuition plus mandatory fees at 0-3% in alignment with the Governor's Budget. The Committee reviewed the recommendation for a 2.6% increase in undergraduate, graduate, and out-of-state tuition rates. In addition, increases to five (5) mandatory fees were recommended. The annual increase in tuition and mandatory fees for an undergraduate in-state student taking f15 credit hours would be \$240, or a 2.5% overall increase, in compliance with THEC's combined range. A proposed 3% increase in housing rates was also reviewed. for

The committee approved all proposed increases to tuition, fees, and housing rates, with an amendment to increase the athletic fee. The amendment provided for an additional \$23 in the athletic fee to be used specifically for athletic capital projects. With this addition, the annual increase in tuition and mandatory fees for an undergraduate in-state student taking fifteen (15) credit hours will be \$286, or a 2.98% overall increase, still in compliance with THEC's combined range.

Trustee DeLay noted that public notice of the proposed increases to tuition and mandatory fees was properly given and that public comments were received and made available for review consistent with Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-7-1603.

#### **Compensation Plan – Action**

The compensation plan was presented by Kathy Musselman, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources. The Governor’s Budget provided partial funding of \$6.1 million in recurring funding for a 5% salary pool. The estimated cost to fully fund a 5% salary pool for the university was \$9.4 million. The University administration recommended using the salary funding received by the State to provide employees with a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), which equates to a 3.2% increase with a \$1,250 minimum. This allows employees earning \$39,062 or less to receive the \$1,250 increase while other employee increases will be based on 3.2% of their annual salary. Additional salary increases, whether through market adjustments or a merit system, or a combination of both, will be brought to the Committee at the November meeting once fall enrollment numbers have been finalized. The Committee unanimously approved the compensation proposal.

#### **Operating Budgets – Action**

The estimated budget is the final budget for the fiscal year and reflects adjustments needed for spring enrollment, additional funding provided through state appropriations, and other miscellaneous adjustments. The July budget is a base budget for the upcoming fiscal year and is based on a 2.5% tuition increase and includes mandatory fee increases, salary and operating appropriation increases approved by the General Assembly for 2023-24, and a flat enrollment. Vice President Thomas presented in detail both the 2022-2023 estimated budget and the 2023-2024 proposed budget.

#### **Motion**

Trustee DeLay made the motion to approve the action items recommended by the Committee and Trustee Boyd seconded the motion. Discussion ensued involving comments received. In



particular, the Student Government Association's (SGA) correspondence that outlined concerns about the increases in tuition and fees in the current economic climate along with promoting student input through presentation of proposed increases to the SGA. The SGA proposed a three-year phase in of the athletic fee increase.

Vice Chair Karbowski expressed that she considers it a good practice to engage with the SGA on proposed fee increases in that it allows for transparency and further discussion with the student body representatives around why increases are required. She observed that we fell short regarding the athletic fee increase. President McPhee indicated that he met with the SGA President and explained our process. He acknowledged that the SGA should have been given a heads up on the athletic fee increase and promised that in the future, like all other increases, we will follow that practice.

Trustee Wright shared her opinion on the SGA's proposed phase in of the athletic fee which led for her to present a motion to amend. Her motion called for \$23 of the athletic fee increase to be phased in over a three-year period: 2023-24, 2024-25, and 2025-26. Vice Chair Karbowski seconded the motion. Discussion followed with all the Trustees expressing their respective opinions on the additional \$23 increase and various aspects of the project, including renovation of the Murphy Center noting the many roles the building performs for the university and the broader community. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to amend failed. Next, a voice vote was taken on the original motion and the motion to approve the action items carried unanimously.

#### **Introduction of Faculty Trustee - Information**

Chairman Smith announced this was Trustee Cottle's final meeting as the Board's Faculty Trustee and commended Trustee Cottle as being an outstanding representative of his peers. Trustee Cottle thanked everyone for the opportunity to work with them and to expand his understanding of how the University works.

President McPhee introduced Dr. Mary Martin to the Board of Trustees as the new Faculty Trustee selected by the University Faculty Senate. Dr. Martin is no stranger to the Board as she previously served as the faculty trustee. Dr. Martin is a Professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences. She has a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics from MTSU, and she studied Commutative Ring Theory while earning her Master's and PhD at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In her 20+ years at MTSU, Dr. Martin has taught undergraduate and graduate courses, managed multiple federal grants to benefit Tennessee middle and high school teachers, and she served as the Faculty Senate President during the year of transition to the new Board.

#### **Appointment of Student Trustee - Action**

Chairman Smith recognized Drew Carpenter for his service as the 6<sup>th</sup> MTSU Student Trustee and wished him well in his future endeavors. Trustee Carpenter thanked the Board, faculty, staff, and students for his opportunity to serve. He stated that it has been a fantastic 12 months serving on the board, and hoped that he brought some student perspective to the conversation and provided a student voice on the Board.

Article 4.5 of the Board bylaws notes that the appointment of student representatives will be for a term of one year. President McPhee gave a summary of the selection process for Student Trustee. The process is managed by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Student Government Association. Applications are submitted to the Student Government Association (SGA) Office. The SGA Executive Board reviews the applications and selects applicants to be interviewed. After interviews are conducted of the selected candidates, the three finalists' applications are sent to the Office of the President. President McPhee then personally interviews the top three applicants and makes a recommendation for the Board.

President McPhee recommended Ms. Molly Mihm as the next Student Trustee. Molly has completed her undergraduate degree and is pursuing her graduate degree in Public Health.

Academically, Molly is a high achieving student, excelling in the classroom as well as being active with in organizations both on and off campus. She will be a terrific representative of our student body in her work with the Trustees.

### **Motion**

Trustee DeLay made the motion to accept the recommendation of Ms. Molly Mihm as the student representative for the MTSU Board of Trustees and Trustee Wright seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the action item carried unanimously.

Chairman Smith recognized Ms. Mihm. He also invited her to join any committee she is interested in joining.

### **Report of the President**

President McPhee thanked the Board for the opportunity to give updates on matters at the University relative to Fall 2023.

President McPhee shared that as of June 1, new freshmen applications are up 1574 students, a 13% increase compared to last year. Freshman newly admitted for the fall are up by 408, a 5% increase, and we are pleased, knowing that community college enrollment has declined significantly, that new transfer applications are up by 122 students, a 5.1% increase. He noted that this just did not happen by accident, but is the result of a lot of work in partnership with community colleges. As a result, transfer newly admitted students for fall are up by 40 students, a 2.5% increase.

CUSTOMS Orientation sessions are underway for both freshman and transfers. Registrations for CUSTOMS remain strong, reflecting the increases in newly admitted freshmen and transfers. And our earliest check on actual enrollments for new undergraduates shows that we are above

where we were at this point last year for most of our recruitment territories. In sum, most admission variables are pointing in positive directions.

With regards to graduate students, there is a challenge. President McPhee stated that as of June 9, enrollment for our graduate students is down by 198 students, a 12.3% decline. The Graduate School and the Provost are actively working on this issue. He also shared that graduate students tend to enroll at the very last moment, which has been the trend for years, and we have seventy (70) days until the start of classes. He is optimistic that our numbers will be above last year's, and we will continue to work very hard as a staff and faculty.

President McPhee commended the efforts and hard work of our recruiters, faculty, program directors, and the office of student affairs. They have done a tremendous job in light of the declining enrollment across the country. He stated that numerous higher education articles reference this decline as the enrollment cliff. For MTSU to be at least holding our own at this point, he is very pleased.

President McPhee also shared that the MTSU undergraduate teacher preparation program was recognized by the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) among the best in the nation in preparing future elementary teachers to teach children to read, earning an A+ distinction in Council's new report entitled *Teacher Prep Review: Strengthening Elementary Reading Instruction*. Our program is among just forty-eight (48) nationwide and two (2) in Tennessee highlighted by NCTQ for going above and beyond the standards set by literacy experts for coverage of the most effective methods of reading instruction—often called the “science of reading.” President McPhee offered his congratulations to Interim Dean Rick Vanosdall and his colleagues for this outstanding recognition.

President McPhee shared that on May 8, Chairman Smith and he, along with individuals from the College of Education and Executive Director David Mansouri from the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) formally announced a partnership, the Tennessee Teach Back

Initiative. An innovative program to recruit prospective teachers from school districts within high-needs, rural areas of the state, train them at MTSU's College of Education, and return them to teach in their local communities. He recognized Chairman Smith along with Tracy and Bill Frist for their roles in helping develop this program.

Lastly, Dr. McPhee recognized three incredible members of the True Blue family who have announced their retirements: Debra Sells - Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment Services; Diane Snodgrass - Interim Chief Audit Executive - Audit and Consulting Services ; and Sarah Sudak - Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. He shared that their combined service at MTSU is nearly one hundred (100) years and that the impact of their dedication to MTSU's success will never be forgotten. He expressed that it was his honor to say thank you for the foundation they have laid through the incredible work they have done to make the University what it is today.

As a follow up to his Tennessee Teach Back Initiative comments, President McPhee stated that the goal in the first year is to recruit twenty (20) to fifty (50) students and to have fifty (50) to one hundred (100) students in each subsequent year. He stated this would make a significant difference over a period of time. A key is continued and enhanced financial support. He referred to a conversation he had with the chairman of the State Board of Education, inviting him to our campus to learn about the program and to hopefully provide some support. This program could very well be transformative.

### **Closing**

In closing, Chairman Smith echoed President McPhee's comments on the Tennessee Teach Back Initiative. He stated that if our goal is to change lives, nobody can change more lives than teachers. If we produced two hundred (200) teachers who then go to rural areas and teach and change lives, which will be more transformative than any other program we have. It will change thousands of lives in line with our mission. He then thanked staff and faculty for their efforts.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
James C. Floyd, Board Secretary