

REPORT FROM THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT LIFE, AND ATHLETICS COMMITTEE

August 15, 2017

The Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on Monday, August 15, 2017, at Middle Tennessee State University. Chairwoman Pam Wright called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. (CDT). A quorum was present with the following Committee members in attendance: J.B. Baker, Pete Delay, Joey Jacobs, Tony Johnston, Steve Smith, Pam Wright, Lindsey Weaver, Keith Huber and Chris Massaro. Also present were Trustee Darrell Freeman; Sidney McPhee, President; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; Brenda Burkhardt, Chief Audit Executive; Mark Byrnes, Interim University Provost; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Bruce Petryshak, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Deb Sells, Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment and Academic Services; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; and, Heidi Zimmerman, University Counsel and Board Secretary.

Chairwoman Wright thanked everyone for coming and stated the agenda items were for information and discussion only; there were no action items.

Dr. McPhee greeted the committee and introduced the Dean of the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, Dr. Terry Whiteside, and the Director of the School of Nursing, Dr. Jenny Sauls. Dr. McPhee stated the MTSU School of Nursing is ranked in the top 15 nursing programs in the country.

Dr. Sauls presented a [history of the MTSU nursing program](#) from 1988 to present. She noted NCLEX scores are very significant and that the scores of MTSU student nurses are trending up. The Tennessee State Board of Nursing requires an 85% pass rate for the program to remain in good standing. Dr. Sauls mentioned that the program is expensive due to factors such as the faculty to student ratio required by clinical sites and salary competition within the private nursing practice. Dr. Sauls recommended no expansion of the undergraduate program at this time. Currently, the School of Nursing is working on the transition of the Masters in Nursing from TN e-Campus to MTSU.

Trustee Delay asked about the marketplace for nurses. Dr. Sauls said Saint Thomas and Vanderbilt hired 85% of our May 2017 nursing graduates. 88% of the students have a job prior to graduation and 90% of our graduates stay in the Middle Tennessee area.

Board Chairman Smith asked about the cost of producing a nursing graduate, and about the value to society of producing nurses.

Trustee Freeman noted that HCA wants the program and the graduates.

Dr. McPhee said we will compare costs to Vanderbilt and the University of Memphis. There are certain requirements for accreditation, such as faculty to student ratios, to have certain programs. He noted that while the cost of programs is quite important, there are other factors that must also be considered. It was noted that affordability is one of the factors used in ranking schools of nursing.

Director Sauls spoke of the career fair her school holds for students and the fact that MTSU has one of the lowest-cost nursing programs in the state.

Dr. Sells introduced the second presentation, on [Fraternity & Sorority Life](#). The role of fraternities and sororities has changed much over the last 30 years. Dr. Sells stated that there's no doubt fraternities and sororities contribute to student satisfaction and persistence, increased participation in leadership and philanthropic activities, and make happy alumni. MTSU must find a way to balance supporting these organizations against potential liability issues created by them. We continue education efforts to combat hazing and binge drinking. Accreditation level of each fraternity and sorority determines the level of oversight by the Office of Fraternity and Sorority life.

Dr. Byrnes notified the Trustees of [new academic degrees under consideration](#) under the leadership of newly-appointed Vice Provost for Academic Programs, Peter Cunningham. Dr. Byrnes explained that proposing new academic degrees is a lengthy and faculty-driven process. In response to a question from Board Chairman Smith, Dr. McPhee noted that there is a cost-benefit analysis done for each new program proposed. Dr. Byrnes stated that the University has closed several programs over the past few years and considers carefully each year THEC's report on Low Producing Programs. That report, and the university's response, will be presented at the next meeting.

With regard to the final informational item, Dr. Sells said that the University is still researching the issue of adding a question about criminal convictions to the admissions application and conducting criminal background checks, and will report its findings at the next committee meeting. A request was made that other institutions' admissions processes be reviewed for comparison.

The next committee meeting will be held in early to mid-November. The next meetings of the full board will be September 12 and December 5.

The meeting adjourned 12:04 p.m. (CDT).

Respectfully submitted,

Academic Affairs, Student Life and Athletics Committee