

Minutes from the April Meeting of the Faculty Senate

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate was held on Monday, April 13, 2020 at 3:30 pm. The meeting was conducted virtually via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attendance

Present: Michael Arndt, Sanjay Asthana, Sal Barbosa, Nita Brooks, Larry Burriss, Nancy Caukin, Chong Chen, Laura Cochrane, Rick Cottle, Song Cui, Trevor de Clercq, Andrew Dix, Rudy Dunlap, Latoya Eaves, Stuart Fowler, Justin Gardner, Bob Gordon, Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand, Shannon Harmon, Michael Hein, Christina Hiers, Seth Jones, Rachel Kirk, Paul Kline, Marcus Knight, Darren Levin, Melissa Lobegeier, Alfred Lutz, Preston MacDougall, Dan Morrell, Pamela Morris, John Mullane, Susan Myers-Shirk, Kari Neely, Deana Raffo, Joan Raines, Patrick Richey, Brian Robertson, Garrett Salmon, Stephen Salter, Scott Seipel, Mary Ellen Sloane, Nat Smith, Raj Srivastava, Zhen Wang, Dennis Walsh, Elizabeth Wright, Andrew Wyatt

Excused: Rebecca Fischer, Pippa Holloway

Absent: Margaret Fontanesi-Seime, Brian Parsons

President Gardner called the meeting to order at 3:30pm. Gardner recognized guest, Mary Martin (Faculty Trustee).

Approval of February 2020 Minutes

Larry Burriss moved to approve the February 2020 minutes and Nita Brooks seconded. The motion carried.

Reports from Officers and Committees

Treasury Report

Deana Raffo reported the Senate's budget. As of March 31, 2020, the balances are: Travel: \$1,527.14 and Operating: \$2,112.44.

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics – no report

MT Engage

There were 100 applicants for the scholarship: 37 qualified, 14 scholarships were awarded representing all 7 colleges. The overall winner was a Jones College of Business student. They are planning to reschedule the spring ceremony for the fall.

Finance and Personnel – no report.

Mary Martin shared that that part of the Board of Trustees meeting involved the President's salary.

Executive and Governance – no report

Mary Martin shared that this is the year for the sunset audit and that auditors are getting in touch with Board members, FS president, and SGA president. The primary focus seems to be student and staff security.

Audit and Compliance – no report

Carbon Footprint Committee

Have had discussions with environmental awareness student organization. Will submit a report with recommendations in early fall. A student project is underway that involves a survey on Rutherford County Recycling. Senators were encouraged to participate in the survey.

President's Report

COVID 19 & Uncertain Times

Gardner shared that he has been involved in many meetings. A current big question is what is going to happen in the fall. Decision-makers are hoping for "business as usual" but making contingency plans. Fall enrollment currently looks good and registration is progressing along just fine. There have been inquiries regarding staff and students who have tested positive for COVID 19. The university is not releasing info about faculty specifically.

Summer Classes

An accelerated process for approving remote learning for summer courses is required. Faculty have expressed concerns about the approval process, the timeline, and other issues such as closed captioning and other difficulties or philosophical differences in the best way to teach content. There is concern that the "accelerated process" is not really accelerated but seems to be similar to the full online approval process.

Fall Classes

There was a concern that faculty are not on contract for June and July yet may be required to create new content if remote learning becomes necessary for fall classes. Because things are so uncertain about the fall, faculty should be thinking ahead. Faculty need resources to teach remotely for the fall.

Gardner asked that faculty email him with resources that are needed in the event that fall classes need to be delivered remotely. He will aggregate the information to generate a comprehensive list of resources that faculty need to be successful.

General Education

The General Education redesign is on currently pause with the hope to pick up the conversation in the fall. There is concern that our on-ground offerings from full-time faculty is part of what differentiates us from community college. MTSU will have to "up our game" to compete with community colleges if remote learning is required in the fall. The Gen Ed Committee may need to meet in the summer depending on the requirements for fall. There is further concern about Gen Ed course staffing. Some classes have 75-100 students, yet the standard enrollment for online classes is 25 students. Planning ahead is important for Gen Ed and Susan Myers-Shirk will be getting faculty together to brainstorm in anticipation of remote/hybrid learning for the fall.

Revised P&T Policies

Gardner encouraged faculty to go to proposed policy revisions and give feedback.

Storms Last Night

There were severe storms last night, especially in the Chattanooga area. Senators were asked to let colleagues know we are expected to give students some grace because of the complicated things going on.

Nominations and Elections

Gardner noted that Faculty Senate would conduct the elections via the Zoom poll feature.

President Elect

Bob Gordon and Rick Cottle were nominated. There were no further nominations from the floor. Both candidates gave brief introductions and a pitch for why Senators should vote for them.

Gardner gave the Zoom poll instructions and cautioned that the Zoom poll may lag and asked Senators to not submit the response more than once. He assured Senators that the poll is anonymous.

Results - Rick Cottle: 28 votes, Bob Gordon: 24 votes. Gardner congratulated Rick Cottle, Faculty Senate President Elect for 2020-2021. Bob Gordon also offered his congratulations and support.

Recording Secretary

Rachel Kirk was the only nomination. There were no further nominations from the floor. Kirk introduced herself with a pitch for being Recording Secretary. Senators voted unanimously in favor of Rachel Kirk. Gardner offered his congratulations.

Steering Committee

The May Senate meeting will focus on staffing the Steering Committee. There are currently a few volunteers. Avonda will send out information about the slots that still need to be filled.

Old Business

There was no old business.

Announcements

Library

Rachel Kirk encouraged faculty to reach out to their Library liaison for assistance with content, videos, and other resources.

Financial Exigency

Gardner encouraged Senators to review Policy 40 Financial Exigency that outlines reduction in workforce in a financial crisis. Faculty Senate is to be consulted in this process.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:38pm.

Respectfully submitted by Deana Raffo, Recording Secretary