

# MTSU Faculty Senate

December 7, 2020

3:30 pm via Zoom

Minutes

I. Call to Order: President Rick called the meeting to order at 3:36p.m.

## II. Attendance

Present -

Sanjay Asthana, Sal Barbosa, Vaughn Barry, Larry Burriss, Lando Carter, Claire Cook, Rick Cottle, Douglas Dabbs, Trevor de Clercq, Kathryn Fenton, Stuart Fowler, Andrienne Friedli, Justin Gardner, Bob Gordon, Michael Hein, Christina Heirs, Seth Jones, Rebecca King, Rachel Kirk, Ryan Korstange, Francis Koti, Darren Levin, Melissa Lobegeier, Alfred Lutz, Preston MacDougall, Suzanne Mangrum, Mary Martin, Janet McCormick, Lei Maio, Dan Morrell, John Mullane, Kari Neely, Todd O'Neill, Sharon Parente, Alicia Pence, Ariana Postlethwait, Joan Raines, Pat Richey, Brian Robertson, Stephen Salter, Scott Seipel, Nat Smith, Raj Srivastava, Zhen Wang, Andrew Wyatt

Excused:

Jacob Avila, Song Cui, Rudy Dunlap, Lynn Nelson, Garrett Salmon, Elizabeth Wright

Absent:

Brian Parsons, Dennis Walsh

III. Guests: Michell Stepp and Ginger Freedman, representatives from the

MTSU Alumni Association spoke to the Senate about two programs that are open to their students.

- A. MT Talks: Alumni speak to class via Zoom. Currently 300 alumni connections have participated. For instance, an alumni from Apple spoke to a computer science class.
- B. MT Connect: This program pairs a student up with an alumni from MTSU who mentors them. Alumni also mentor other alumni.
- C. The Alumni office will form a website for these programs. Within the website, a student or alumni can find someone within a specific niche. Faculty will receive emails in the spring semester that provide more information.

#### **IV. Senate Governance**

- A. Approval of Previous Minutes: Kari motioned to approve the minutes. Ray seconded the motion. The minutes were approved.
- B. Treasury Report: The Faculty Senate budget was not available from the Office of Accounting at the time of the meeting this month.
- C. BOT Committee Reports:
  - 1. Finance was represented by Senator Stephen Salter. Senator Salter explained to the Senate that auxiliaries fund themselves. The main

university budget is down \$19 million. MTSU did not get the performance incentive for AY 2021; Distance students were not required to pay fees that are ordinarily required by the university; and Enrollment decreased. Central administration recovered 6 million from redirecting back monies from the colleges. Operating funds remain a mystery. We still do not know what is being spent out of operating expenses, perhaps COVID expenses. An increase in scholarship expenses also impacted the budget. In agreement with Stephen Salter, Mary Martin voiced her concern that the administration is tapping into the auxiliary funds to pay off dept. Timing differences between budgeting and expenses makes comparison between them difficult. Despite the difficulty of reconciling the actual expenses vs. budgeted expenses remains necessary.

1. Senate Governance Committee:

A representative of the Senate Governance Committee updated the Senate about the upcoming Faculty Trustee election. Emails were sent to faculty that announcing the election for Trustee were sent to faculty on December x, 2020. The email will go out to faculty again on the

first day of the spring semester, January 25, 2021. Nominations are closed on February 1. Remind your department about the nomination.

2. Policy Committee:

Members of the Senate Policy Committee encouraged Faculty Senators to comment on Policy 32 by December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Policy 32 represents how faculty and administration share power. Implications of Policy 32 include the way in which university committees are constructed, how many faculty are included in committee proposals, and the role of faculty in leading these committees.

Senator Alfred Lutz has submitted his comments regarding Policy 32. Senator Lutz's comments addressed academic controversies such as distance education, ensuring that MTSU can continue to function while protecting the integrity and quality of courses, and the essential membership of faculty members on committees.

The Senate continued to discuss distance education, especially the concern that the direction of distance education away from academic control. The Provost should have final approval over the distance education curriculum. Structurally, distance education belongs in Academic Affairs.

The distance education turned to the dual enrollment issue. Faculty members are being pressured by high school principals and MTSU administration to reduce academic requirements for the dual enrolled students. The Senate considered “what can be done?” Suggested Action plan items include:

- a. Calling on faculty with “dogs in the fight.”
- b. Logging their concerns

Kari Neely asked if the Policy 32 review process could be delayed. Mary Martin stressed the importance of knowing where the landmines are located when reviewing the policy. Kari Neely stated that she would like to part of the review. In addition, she suggested asking Alfred Lutz to speak with the Provost and ask for the entire process to slow down.

#### **V. General Senate Discussions**

President Cottle as well as other Senators asserted the need to take a partnership approach to the administration. President Cottle explained that the administration to know that Faculty Senate are partners in shaping the future of higher education. Faculty members can help find areas of funding. In addition, it

is important for the Faculty Senate to express confidence in the administration's financing actions.

Over 500,000 jobs have been lost in academia as a result of the COVID pandemic.

Faculty Senators reminded the Senate that the State of Tennessee gave summer school to community colleges.

Mary Martin asserted the need for faculty to have contracts that required that faculty teach two out of three semesters during a full academic year.

Stephen Salter noted that in the College of Business does not share the experience of other colleges as all of its 2000 and 3000 level classes make.

The University Curriculum Committee and the General Education Committee face the most controversial issues in uniting the philosophy of higher education with curriculum strategies to attract the most students.

In the observation of Senators, the people who don't want to address change are the Chairs and Deans. One Senator suggested creating action items that include inviting Chairs and Deans to Faculty Senate meetings once a semester.

## **VI. Old Business**

- A. The TUFS Survey closed on December 4, 2020. About 2,000 faculty members, 29%, across the state participated in the survey. Michael Hein and Rick Moffit interpret results at their December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- B. President Cottle expressed his surprise that President McPhee, Provost Byrnes, and Associate Provost, Cheryl Torsney are eager to receive the results of the survey.
- C. Rick Cottle noted that University of Tennessee's legislative liaison are involved in state legislation every day.
- D. Cottle also shared information about the budget that he has heard in meetings with administration. As of December 7, 2020, Cottle reported that the university budget will stay level for academic year 2022.

**VII.** The Board of Trustees noted that the rapid switch to online learning should result in future reductions to the cost of teaching.

**VIII.** New Business

Rick Cottle has been nominated for the Faculty Representative on the Board of Trustees and has accepted the nomination. President Cottle has recused himself from further involvement in the Trustee Election.

**IX.** Next Faculty Senate Meeting will be held on February 8, 2021 @ 3:30 pm

**X.** The meeting adjourned at 4:40 pm.