

Minutes from the September Meeting of the Faculty Senate

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate was held on Monday, September 14, 2020 at 3:30 pm via Zoom.

Attendance

Present

Sanjay Asthana, Jacob Avila, Sal Barbosa, Vaughn Barry, Larry Burriss, Lando Carter, Rick Cottle, Claire Cook, Douglas Dabbs, Trevor de Clercq, Andrew Dix, Rudy Dunlap, Kathryn Fenton, Stuart Fowler, Andrienne Friedli, Justin Gardner, Michael Hein, Christina Hiers, Seth Jones, Rebekka King, Rachel Kirk, Ryan Korstange, Francis Koti, Darren Levin, Melissa Lobegeier, Alfred Lutz, Suzanne Mangrum, Preston MacDougall, Lei Miao, Dan Morrell, John Mullane, Kari Neely, Lynn Nelson, Todd O'Neill, Sharon Parente, Alicia Pence, Ariana Postlethwait, Joan Raines, Patrick Richey, Brian Robertson, Garrett Salmon, Stephen Salter, Scott Seipel, Nat Smith, Raj Srivastava, Zhen Wang, Andrew Wyatt

Excused

Song Cui, Robert Gordon, Elizabeth Wright

Absent

Brian Parsons, Dennis Walsh

Approval of Minutes

Faculty Senate President, Rick Cottle, called the meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. Kari Neely moved to approve in one vote the minutes from the February 24, 2020 Special Called Meeting; April 30, 2020 Special Called Meeting; the May 29, 2020, Special Called Meeting; the June 17, 2020 Special Called Meeting; and the July 30, 2020 Special Called Meeting. Larry Burriss seconded the motion. The minutes from these meetings were approved.

Reports from Officers and Committees

Treasury Report

Rachel Kirk reported that the Travel and Operating budgets were consistent with the July 31, 2020 budget.

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee

Chair Alfred Lutz informed the Senate of the topics discussed at the Board of Trustee's Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee meeting.

1. Curriculum changes: The committee approved of three new degree program: a B.A. in Art Therapy, a M.A. in Art Therapy, and a M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies. In addition, a Master's in Data Science is being considered.

2. Chris Massaro, Director of Athletics, informed the committee that the academic success of MTSU's student athletes placed in the top echelon with universities such as Duke University and Vanderbilt University.
3. The committee generally approved of the testing protocol implemented by Director Massaro in response to COVID19 with two exceptions. The first was President McPhee, who expressed serious reservations to the expense of the testing process. The second was Trustee Freeman who strongly objected to MTSU's decision to play football this season.
4. Ken Paulson, the director of the Free Speech Center at MTSU, presented the Chicago Statement on Free Speech as a model free-speech statement. The Committee reaffirmed enthusiastically MTSU Policy 103 (Free Speech on Campus), which largely follows the Chicago example.
5. Alfred Lutz pointed to a contradiction between Board Policy 103 and Policy 201 which protects Academic Freedom. Senator Lutz has asked Provost Byrnes for guidance in understanding the contradiction and is awaiting response.

Rick Cottle provided context to President McPhee's concern regarding the cost of testing. The testing protocol requires frequent COVID19 testing, but also an echocardiogram and potentially a MRI if the athlete tests positive more than once. The costs of an echocardiogram and MRI could be very expensive.

Finance and Personnel Committee

Stephen Salter reported on Finance and Personnel Committee's meeting. He gave an overview of how MTSU has managed its budget and continues to make adjustments.

1. President McPhee has had some indication there may be a reduction of costs in Athletics.
2. The university received \$19 million of federal assistance earlier this year. Half of that award was earmarked for student's tuition and welfare. The other \$8.5 million was distributed among the Colleges primarily for technology.
3. Theoretically, the 2.6% cut to MTSU's AY 20-21 budget would have left MTSU's budget at AY 19-20 levels. However, three factors reduced MTSU's budget further:
 - a. The university spent \$2.6 million on scholarships.
 - b. MTSU failed to meet an incentive guideline outcome and lost 1.3% of its funding.
 - c. The university invested \$1.2 million in seed money for the Master's in Physician Assistant Studies program.
 - d. The amended budget resulted in cuts in discretionary funds.
4. The final 3.8% cut was implemented across the board. MTSU will not make strategic or targeted cuts. President McPhee is relieved that he was able to forego strategic cuts.

5. Two schedules were provided to the BOT Finance and Personnel Committee: a) a schedule of emergency funds; and b) A listing of fixed costs increases that would normally be offset by increases in tuition but now must be covered by reduced spending in other areas.

Executive and Governance Committee

No report.

Audit and Compliance

No report.

Campus Sustainability

Kari Neely reported that students were enthusiastic and active in campus sustainability efforts.

Brief Senate Retreat

President Cottle urged new Senators to familiarize themselves with the [Faculty Senate Schedule](#), and the [Bylaws of MTSU Faculty Senate](#).

President's Report

Committees

President Cottle addressed expectations of Faculty Senators. Senators are required to attend meetings, represent the issues of their departments, and keep departmental colleagues informed of the Senate's activities.

There is no expectation to serve on any additional Faculty Senate Committees. Rick recommended that Senators serve on committees in which they had a strong interest and/or expertise. Examples include Alfred Lutz, policy review; Stephen Salter, finance; Todd O'Neill, communication; and Bob Gordon, review of Bylaws.

Rick will contact each Faculty Senator to discuss potential interest in serving on a Faculty Senate committee. Faculty Senators are also encouraged to contact Rick about their interest in specific committees.

Senate Structure

Rick Cottle proposed a new Senate structure based on communication flows. The Executive Team is informed by the Faculty Senate and informs the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee functions as a communication channel between Faculty Senators and the President

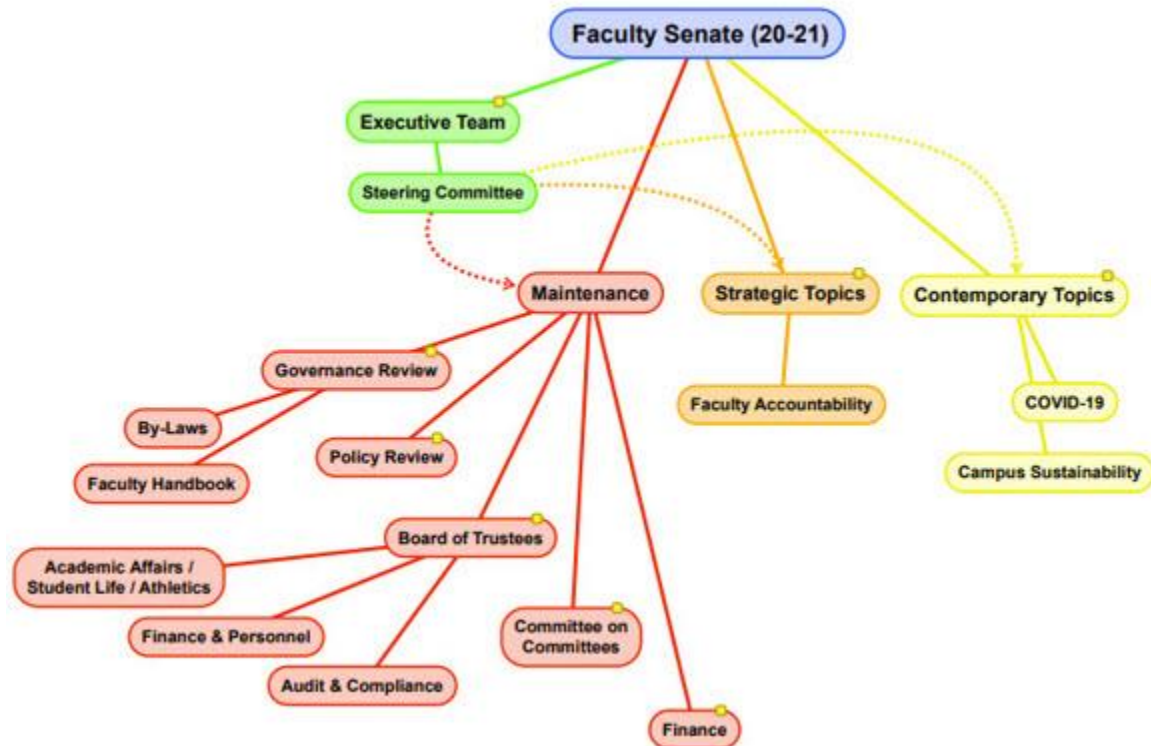
and Provost. It informs and is informed by the Maintenance Committees, the Contemporary Issues Committee, and the Strategic Issues Committee. Specific duties include:

- Serving as liaisons between the Faculty Senate and the President and Provost.
- Advocating for Faculty Senate's perspectives, arguments, and evidence to the President and the Provost.
- Communicating the President's and Provost's concerns and perspectives to the Faculty Senate.

Faculty Senate Committees report information to Faculty Senate and directly communicate with the Steering Committee.

- Maintenance Activities
 - ❖ Governance Review
 - ❖ Policy Review
 - ❖ Board of Trustee Committees (Current Bylaws require Senate committees that mirror BOT committees)
 - ❖ Committee on Committees
 - ❖ Finance
- Contemporary Issues
 - ❖ COVID-19
 - ❖ Campus Sustainability
- Strategic Issues
 - ❖ Faculty Responsibility

Rick Cottle's Diagram of Proposed Faculty Senate Structure



Proposed Committee Adjustments

1. Create a Governance Committee, led by the President -Elected to review Faculty Senate Bylaws and to review and revise the Faculty Handbook.
2. Create a Policy Review Committee led by Alfred Lutz.
3. Review of all University Standing Committees by the Committee on Committees.

Strategic

Rick Cottle discussed some issues that challenge the Faculty Senate and the faculty.

1. The university invests (mainly through salaries of senators) \$172,000 in the Faculty Senate. Rick is concerned that the Senate can prove that this cost is justified.
2. In addition, President Cottle is concerned about the perception of faculty responsibility. He has heard from administration that it is an issue being discussed by the Board of Trustees as well as members of university administration. President Cottle suggested

that we address faculty responsibilities in the Faculty Handbook.

President Cottle urged Senators to disagree with him on any of the ideas he presented.

Alfred Lutz remarked that the Faculty do not need to live up to administrative expectations.

Old Business

Discussion of Student Survey

At this time faculty have no idea what the survey asks, or the responses given. Alfred Lutz voiced his concerns about the recent Student Survey. Faculty were not allowed to see the survey. The danger of this type of survey is that is an attempt to use a crisis to increased surveillance of faculty. Are we going to be evaluated on survey results? Alfred wrote to Provost Byrne about his concern about the survey and its deficiencies.

Michael Hein stated that the survey is poorly designed. Michael informed the Senate that Rick Sluder is monitoring the MTSU Facebook site. Whenever Sluder sees a complaint, it is sent to the Dean of the College, then to the Chair, and then to faculty member. Complaints are terrible sources of data for assessment.

Kari Neely stated that given the amount of work that faculty have accomplished during the COVID19, the survey demoralizes faculty. Faculty are at risk of burnout.

President Cottle voiced his concern that the administration utilizes a time limit to push an agenda that the Faculty Senate should push back. He will get a copy of the survey and its results for the Faculty Senate. Rick will also address and provide a statement to correct Associate Provost Torsney's email stating, "the student survey was created in consultation with the Faculty Senate." The corrected statement should read, "The Faculty Senate gave input to the survey but did not endorse the survey."

President Cottle observed that the administration is focused on perception, not facts. The administration does not know how to respond or manage a situation where a parent is angry and complains. The administration overreacts because the complaint reflects poorly on the university. They end up placated the parent.

New Business

Preston MacDougall informed the Senate that University of Tennessee System is pursuing the acquisition of Martin Methodist College in Pulaski, Tennessee.

Ongoing Issues

1. Review of intellectual property policy.
2. Review of temporary attendance policy.

3. Dual enrollment and its impact.
4. Review of Faculty Senate Bylaws.
5. Use of Faculty D2L shell for internal documents and other communication
6. Inviting Alan Thomas to Senate meeting to explain the budget.
7. Acquiring the financial reports sent to the BOT

The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rachel Kirk