

Minutes from the May 2, 2022 Meeting of the Faculty Senate

The regular Faculty Senate meeting was held on Monday, May 2, 2022 at 2:30 PM. The meeting was conducted both in-person in JUB 100C and via Zoom for those who preferred to attend remotely.

Attendance

Jeremy Aber, Anne Anderson, Jacob Avila, Sal Barbosa, Vishwas Bedekar, Larry Burriss, Lando Carder, Rick Cottle, Sally Ann Cruikshank, Douglas Dabbs, Betsy Dalton, Andrea Dawson, Rudy Dunlap, Michelle Finch, Robert Gordon, Lisa Green, Michael Hein, Christina Hiers, Kyle Kennedy, Rachel Kirk, Francis Koti, Preston MacDougall, Lei Miao, Dan Morrell, Kari Neely, David Nelson, Martha Norkunas, John Ouellette, Sharon Parente, Ariana Postlethwait, Patrick Richey, Dianna Rust, Stephen Salter, Scott Seipel, Daniel Smith, Ben Stickle, Suzanne Sutherland, Andrew Wyatt

Zoom

Laura Dubek, Renee Jones, Rachel Kirk, Alicia Pence, Raj Srivastava

Excused

Rebekka King

Absent

Vaughn Barry, Claire Cook, Song Cui, Seth Jones, Zhen Wang

Guests

MTSU President Sidney McPhee, Vice President for Business and Finance Alan Thomas, Assistant Vice President for Human Resource Services Kathy Musselman

Bob Gordon called the meeting to order at 2:31 pm.

Welcome remarks, Faculty Senate President Robert Gordon

Gordon introduced the incoming Faculty Senators for 2022-23: Jeannie Harrington-Accounting, Andrea Georgiou-Aerospace, Keely O'Brien-Agriculture, College of Media and Entertainment-Michelle Conceison, Rafet Al-Tobasei-Computer Science, Philip Seagraves-Economics and Finance, Rudy Dunlap-Health and Human Performance, Amy Harris-Information Systems and Analytics, Rachel Kirk-Library Collection Development, Deana Raffo-Management, Todd O'Neill-Media Arts, Kay Murphree-Nursing, Suman Neupane-Physics and Astronomy, Michael Federici-Political Science and International Relations, Patrick McCarthy-Psychology, Carmelita Dotson-Social Work, Andrew Wyatt-Sociology and Anthropology, James Rost-Womack Educational Leadership, Joan McRae-World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

Treasury Report

The starting budget for operating expenses was \$4380 with an additional \$4573.34 from last year's carry over. A total of \$2636.93 has been spent this year for supplies. The remaining balance in Operating is \$6316.41. \$7121.92 has been encumbered for the installation of a card swipe and a camera ring for the front door.

The starting travel budget was \$1600. The balance remains \$1600.

President McPhee

Gordon introduced President McPhee to the Faculty Senate.

McPhee thanked the Senate for inviting him and told senators he wished to provide an update on key issues and a peek at the challenges ahead.

First, McPhee expressed his appreciation for the work the Senate and faculty have done to keep the university moving over the course of the last two years under difficult circumstances. There was no pandemic how-to manual and yet faculty and staff were able to keep the university going with the health and safety of employees in mind. MTSU had the option to close down completely but chose not to in part because we had approximately 900-1100 students who had nowhere else to go. McPhee reflected on how the absence of any breakdowns makes people think everything went smoothly. He acknowledged that things did not always go smoothly but that we avoided breaking down because of the work of the faculty. Not every decision was a perfect decision but every single university decision was vetted by a leadership team that included the Faculty Senate President. Teamwork, McPhee concluded, made possible the successful management of a very difficult situation.

McPhee reminded senators of the post pandemic enrollment "cliff." In fall 2021, MTSU saw a 6% drop in enrollment. Every single percentage drop in university enrollment represents a \$1 million deficit in the budget. MTSU has two sources of revenue: state appropriations/tuition and fees. Today MTSU has 22,000 students compared to 26,000 students ten years ago. The state expects us to raise tuition to fund part of our costs but then directs MTSU not to increase tuition.

Under these conditions, MTSU has provided salary bonuses and has attempted to deal with market adjustments. McPhee reported that MTSU has not received the full funding from the state for salary plans for ten years. The state only funds 60% of what they recommend. And yet even when we had a significant drop in enrollment, MTSU sometimes tried to give bonuses and reach market because "faculty salaries are my #1 priority."

McPhee reported the "good news" that enrollment has stabilized, testified by the number of applications and admissions, as well as signups for customs. The numbers are through the roof: 23% of the admitted freshmen class has indicated intention to enroll.

The community colleges, however, face significant cuts. Motlow Community College has seen a double-digit drop in their enrollment. Southwest Community College has seen a 25% drop. How do we deal with these issues? We currently have an Enrollment Management Committee coming up with ideas to help stem the decline and allow us to move forward.

McPhee summarized that his message to faculty is that, over the years, every single university in our peer LGIs except one has had to cut departments and positions in these conditions. Some have made draconian cuts. The only universities that have not made any major cuts in personnel or departments are MTSU and Austin Peay (Austin Peay managed to avoid cuts because they were double dipping in the state funding formula). This year the state approved a 4% raise but did not fully fund it. As always, MTSU is committed to helping employees who are currently below the poverty line. Today Alan Thomas will present two possible scenarios to faculty for raises. Bear in mind, however, that the final decision rests with the administration.

Alan Thomas

Thomas explained the following two possibilities for salary increases and handed out materials to senators:

Option: Raise Ranges to 2020-21 CUPA Data and Provide Market Adjustments (no ATB)

Option: 2% ATB, Raise Ranges to 2020-21 CUPA Data, and Provide Market Adjustments

Thomas called for questions.

Q: Will you use the same funding formula as last time?

Thomas: Yes, we will use the same formula as before. If we go with full market, the increase is about 45% closer. If we go with the other plan (which includes 2% ATB), the increase is about 24%.

Q: The first option does not include FTTs but if we move up to 2020-21 rates, wouldn't FTTs be receive adjustments during the renewal process?

Thomas: Yes, when they are rehired they will receive a salary within the new ranges.

Q: When you compare the Classified Staff column in the first and second pages there is a difference. Where does the money go?

Thomas: It's going to the ATB raise.

Q: Who is included in each of these categories? What are Classified Staff?

Kathy Musselman: Classified Staff include secretaries, clerical workers, janitors, etc. Administration includes advisors, coordinators, and anyone who works here who is not Classified Staff or Faculty. The Faculty column includes tenured/tenure-track.

Q: Could you clarify the following? FTTs would get the benefit of the market adjustment when they interviewed again and get hired again, correct? They will get the market adjusted salary then.

Thomas: Yes, correct.

Q: What is our goal for faculty salaries? If we know our goal, which option helps us most?

Thomas: 4% ATB is the only way someone above market will get a raise but it reduces by \$1.2 million the funds available which is now going to people already above market. It means we are losing power to get to market.

Q: Does the second page scenario impact more faculty members because it includes FTTs as well?

Thomas: Yes

Q: Did you consider a third scenario in which you gave ATB to FTTs and a market to everyone else?

Thomas: No. There were several other scenarios being discussed the other day.

Musselman: These scenarios sound nice but are complicated in practice. If we did that, then FTTs would get 4% and some T/TT faculty would get 2.5% and would get less than FTTs. It will make people mad.

McPhee: There is no perfect way. What is the goal? How quickly do we get there? How many people will we impact?

Q: I understand that most get raises if you do ATB. People with the most money will also get the most. If you go full market, those most out of line will get the most. If they are out of line because of merit, that is OK. But we don't do merit here. They are out of line because of chance, or because of who was department chair at the time and what was offered. The answer is obvious to me. I am a Full Professor who has benefited from several market adjustments. I should get less money now.

McPhee: I would like to conduct a straw poll to see what you think.

Q: Can the board come back and say no to these plans?

McPhee: Yes. The Board has a statutory responsibility on the budget. Our job is simply to advise the board.

Q: Which of the two options get us closer to equity?

Thomas: The full market adjustment.

Thomas conducted a straw poll in which many faculty present voted. 18 of those who voted indicated they preferred full market adjustments while 19 indicated ATB.

Q: Which plan will help stop faculty getting poached by other universities?

Thomas: To truly respond to that we would need a significant infusion of funding. That said, the full market adjustment would be the quickest way.

Approval of April Minutes

Anne Anderson moved to accept the Faculty Senate April Meeting Minutes as written, and Daniel Smith seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried.

TUFS Meeting Update

Gordon reported on the TUFS meeting he recently attended with Kari Neely. The meeting included all representative from senates at Tennessee universities, all of whom were discussing similar issues. Gordon promised to send the TUFS meeting minutes to senators by email.

Election of 2022-23 Steering Committee

Gordon received the following volunteers for the 2022-23 Steering Committee.

Basic and Applied Sciences: Vishwas Bedekar, Jeremy Aber

Behavioral and health sciences: Patrick McCarthy, Ben Stickle

Business: Anne Anderson, Phillip Seagraves

Education: Lando Carter, Jim Rost

Liberal Arts: Pat Richey, Andrew Wyatt

Media Entertainment/Library: Sharon Parente, John Ouellette

University College: Dianna Rust, Renee Jones

Committee on Committees

Neely announced the formation of a new permanent committee, the Committee on Committees. This committee will meet primarily in summer to review the university standing committee assignments, ensuring representativeness and addressing rotation issues. Neely received the following volunteers:

Michelle Conceison (College of Media/Entertainment); Vishwas Bedekar (BAS); Anne Anderson (Business); Lando Carter (Education); Pat Richey (CLA); Sharon Parente (Library). No one from BHS or University College volunteered.

Faculty Athletic Engagement Committee

Suzanne Sutherland reported that the Faculty Athletic Engagement Committee has held two meetings with Director of Athletics, Chris Massaro, about holding events for faculty. She told senators that the first event is planned for the September 30 football game. For \$15, faculty will receive a game ticket, t-shirt, and buffet-style meal. There will be activities for families and live music. The Faculty Senate will seek volunteers to serve on the Faculty Athletic Engagement Committee next year to help advise on faculty, students, and departments to honor or otherwise get involved at specific athletic events.

General Education Redesign

Gordon asked Neely to provide an update on General Education Redesign.

Neely explained that packets went out Thursday afternoon with two new models created by the design team in response to faculty feedback received from the university committee. The first

model is TrueBlue Core with Blueprints (formerly pathways). It is the closest thing to the legacy model because it contains the same categories with new SLOs assigned to each category. The second model is TrueBlue Core with Blueprints and Explorations. It looks very similar to the other model but with Explorations put into each disciplinary category. It creates a bifurcated model in which each category has traditional courses and then the second category would be opened up to other disciplines. Each model requires an interdisciplinary faculty learning group formed in fall staffed by people interested in getting into each category. These groups would meet and discuss how to define criteria for each category. Those recommendations will go to the General Education Committee for approval. Comments/surveys/Q&A sessions must all be completed by May 13. On May 20, the General Education Committee meets to discuss feedback. If they want to work into the summer, that is permissible under Policy 32. Also permissible for us to continue to work into summer if you so choose. The Senate has the opportunity to respond after the 20th. My recommendation is to look at the materials and consider what the differences are between the two models. General Education Committee meetings are open to the public and you may attend.

Q: What is the timeline?

Neely: The goal is to approve one of these models by the end of summer.

Q: Could you clarify what the difference is between Model 1 and the legacy curriculum?

A: Yes—in Model 1 people from other disciplines will be able to apply to teach in any categories.

Q: Do all courses have to be approved under the new SLOs?

Neely: Yes

Q: Is there any empirical data this is going to work? What if it is worse?

A: We do not know.

Gordon: How involved would the Senate like to be? Should we form an ad hoc committee to review the redesign and provide feedback?

Neely: If we created a committee, I would be a liaison, not a chair.

Q: What is the purpose of the committee?

Gordon: To follow what is going on. The Senate hasn't had a role yet. The goal would be awareness. The committee would need a representative from each college.

Q: We already have a Steering Committee with a representative from each college. Why can't the Steering Committee do this?

Gordon: That is a good idea.

Anderson moved to respectfully request that the General Education Committee meet with and report to the Steering Committee before any votes on General Education Redesign are taken. Smith seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Senators thanked Gordon for his service as Faculty Senate President and Gordon expressed his gratitude to the Senate.

Smith moved to adjourn the meeting, and Vishwas Bedekar seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:14 pm.

Documents

Spreadsheet showing expenses, encumbrances, and deposits of index 260600 to date.

Alan Thomas distributed two salary increase scenarios.

Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sutherland, Recording Secretary