

## **Minutes from the October Meeting of the Faculty Senate**

The regular Faculty Senate (FS) meeting was held on Monday, October 4, 2021 at 3:30 PM. The meeting was conducted both in-person in JUB 100C and via Zoom for those who were unable to attend in-person due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Attendance**

Present:

Jeremy Aber, Anne Anderson, Sanjay Asthana, Sal Barbosa, Vaughn Barry, Vishwas Bedekar, Larry Burriss, Lando Carter, Paul Chilsen, Claire Cook, Rick Cottle, Douglas Dabbs, Betsy Dalton, Andrea Dawson, Laura Dubek, Michelle Finch, Robert Gordon, Lisa Green, Michael Hein, Christina Hiers, Renee Jones, Seth Jones, Kyle Kennedy, Rebecca King, Francis Koti, Preston MacDougall, Lei Miao, Dan Morrell, Kari Neely, David Nelson, Martha Norkunas, John Ouellette, Sharon Parente, Alicia Pence, Pat Richey, Stephen Salter, Scott Seipel, Daniel Smith, Nat Smith, Raj Srivastava, Ben Stickle, Suzanne Sutherland, Zhen Wang, Andrew Wyatt

Excused:

Jake Avila, Song Cui, Rudy Dunlap, Ariana Postlethwait, Dianna Rust

Absent: NA

Faculty Senate President Bob Gordon called the meeting to order at 3:30 PM.

### **Approval of Faculty Senate September Minutes**

Gordon called for a discussion of the September 13, 2021 draft Faculty Senate meeting minutes. Anne Anderson moved to accept the minutes as written and Daniel Smith seconded. The motion carried.

### **Committee Reports**

#### Treasury

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

The starting budget for operating expenses was \$4,380. The September balance is \$3,337.53.

#### Board of Trustees Mirrored Committees

There is no information to report because these committees have not met.

#### Charge for Ad Hoc Committees

Gordon presented the written charges for the ad hoc committees.

President-Elect Stephen Salter proposed a new ad hoc committee on Distance/Online Learning in response to feedback from President McPhee at the President's Liaison Committee meeting about the importance of Distance/Online Learning to MTSU.

Gordon called for a discussion of the proposed Distance/Online Learning committee and asked for volunteers to serve on this committee. In discussion, it was recommended that FS find out who is currently serving on the university's Distance Learning committee.

Gordon called for additional volunteers to serve on other FS committees. He instructed the COVID committee to choose a chair in committee.

#### Committee Chair Comments/Updates

See above

#### **Old Business**

##### Faculty Covid Policy Amendment status

Gordon thanked FS for their work on the successful policy revision to permit faculty with household members who are ill with COVID-19 and/or quarantined at home to pivot to remote teaching on a temporary basis.

Gordon called for questions about the policy. In discussion, FS agreed that it will be important to get feedback on how the policy works, including data on how long approvals take, the number of cases approved, and the number of cases denied, along with reasons for denials. Gordon stated that he will seek this information from Byrnes when they meet.

##### President response to raise letter status

Gordon reported that he never received an official reply in letter form from President McPhee but was able to share an emailed response from the President's office.

FS decided not to send representatives to the November 9, 2021 Board of Trustees (BOT) Finance Committee Meeting in favor of permitting the FS Finance Committee to complete its charge first, which includes investigating salary issues and recommending actionable items.

##### Attendance-taking policy clarification

Gordon reported that faculty may continue to take attendance in classes as usual. If a student misses class due to illness (whether COVID-19 or not), faculty are permitted to request a medical note. Faculty must not penalize students for being sick.

##### Panopto Issues – follow up discussion with ITD

Gordon reported on the Steering Committee's discussion with ITD about technical difficulties (including sound issues) with Panopto. Gordon relayed important information from ITD to mitigate technical problems (especially the need to charge microphones properly) and promised to follow up by emailing a detailed written summary to FS.

#### **New Business**

##### Betsy Dalton and Kari Neely appointed as Liaison to Gen Ed Redesign Committee

Gordon reported that Betsy Dalton and Kary Neely have been appointed FS liaisons to the General Education Redesign Committee. He also reported that Susan Myers-Shirk will attend the next Steering Committee meeting in order to discuss concerns related to General Education Redesign.

##### ADA online policy improvement

There were no updates on this issue from Senators; however, Avonda Johnston noted that

Todd O'Neil, who is working with Lance Alexis on the Electronic Access Committee, is a useful contact.

#### Student-Teacher and Peer Evaluation Issues

Gordon called for discussion of student and peer evaluation issues. Points discussed included the weight placed on student evaluations for promotion and tenure, response rates, the lack of ability to compare personal data to department, college, and university data, and the piloting of a new tracking system in summer 2021 that in some cases revealed identifiable, individual data about student evaluators to faculty.

FS noted that MTSU recently altered its policy to mandate peer evaluations (see Policy 204, Section 6, Subsection C).

FS resolved to form a 2-3-person committee to collect information and to meet with Cheryl Torsney and Lisa Bass. Volunteers included: Richey, John Ouellette, Renee Jones, and Bob Gordon. Richey asked Senators to send concerns/questions to Gordon via email in the next week. Gordon requested that Senators reach out to the faculty members they represent for additional information.

Daniel Smith moved to adjourn the meeting and Nat Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:28 PM.

#### Documents handed out at the meeting

Draft of Faculty Senate September Meeting Minutes

*These minutes were approved by the Faculty Senate on November 8, 2021.*

*Respectfully submitted by Suzanne Sutherland, Recording Secretary.*