

Faculty Senate Minutes  
September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Attending: Joshua Aaron, Jeremy Aber, Rafet Al-Tobasei, Jacob Avila, Larry Burriss, Lando Carter, Leigh Anne Clark, Michelle Conceison, Douglas Dabbs, Elizabeth Dalton, Laura Dubek, Michael Federici, Andrea Georgiou, Lisa Green, Jeannie Harrington, Samantha Johnson, Kristi Julian, Rachel Kirk, Francis Koti, Phil Loubere, Preston MacDougall, Patrick McCarthy, Janna McClain, Joan McRae, Richard Meeks, Lei Miao, Joseph Morgan, Kay Murphree, Kari Neely, David Nelson, Timothy Nelson, Suman Neupane, Martha Norkunas, John Ouellette, Sharon Parente, Jack Purcell, Shannon Randol, James Robertson, Robert Rogers, Jim Rost, Dianna Rust, Stephen Salter, Philip Seagraves, Raj Srivastava, Suzanne Sutherland, Andrew Wyatt, Sam Zaza.

Absent: Carmelita Dotson, Kyle Kennedy (excused), Keely O'Brien

Kari called the meeting to order at 3:30.

She introduced President McPhee.

President McPhee's remarks

- He values the relationship with the Faculty Senate
- He shared good news on enrollment
- Commended the laser focus on recruiting
- We will see improvements in the classroom
- The compensation of the Faculty is the #1 priority
- Met with a new chair of THEC recently
- First time freshmen up 11% over last year
- New undergraduate students up 8%
- 53% of our students are transfers
- All but one community college has experienced 10%+ drop in enrollment
- Motlow down 17% last 3 years
- Our transfer enrollment is flat
- Need to do better with returning graduate student enrollment. Down 13%.
- Significant increase in new graduate student enrollment
- Significant increase in graduate enrollment during Covid
- FTE should be up due to a 3200 person freshman class

Q&A

Kari Neely: Is the new THEC chair in favor of revising the funding formula?

McPhee: She said the formula is disadvantageous to an institution like MTSU. We have less graduate programs. We are actually the ones educating the most Tennesseans. We have guaranteed admissions and scholarships if you meet certain criteria.

Patrick McCarthy: Are there any rumblings in the legislature that should be on our radar?

McPhee: Everything. Guns. Academic freedom. Diversity.

Francis Koti: New proposal this morning about micro credentials.

McPhee: Wants to support the departments that are moving in that direction.

Larry Burriss: Anything new on hospitality or the law school?

McPhee: RFP is out for the hotel. 2 major hotel corporations are interested. Site next to new tennis courts and the Woodfin Lot. Preference is next to the tennis courts.

On the law school, we are in serious discussion with Nashville School of Law about a joint program. The plan is for a partnership/merger with the NSOL. We lost the vote last time because of flipped votes from Memphis and UT. Also, in conversations with Belmont but that is on the backburner until after the NSOL.

Michael Federici: The NSOL is unaccredited. Is the plan to work toward that?

McPhee: Yes. Our goal will be to pursue accreditation.

Joshua Aaron: How open are we to external fundraising as a source for faculty compensation enhancements?

McPhee: We are very open to outside the box thinking regarding external fundraising to enhance faculty salaries. Cited CORE as an example. The President provided the seed money to get that program off the ground. It is now self-sustaining.

Patrick McCarthy thanked the President for his role in making that program successful.

Lando Carter: Is there a blueprint for replicating that success?

Patrick McCarthy: We can talk about that.

Joshua Aaron: The CORE example was a great one. My question was slightly different. If we raise external fund, will we be allowed to use it for faculty support?

McPhee: The answer is yes!

Stephen Salter: The President of Tennessee State is on the way out. Rumor has it that they were interested in pursuing R1 status.

McPhee: I don't think so. They get significant funding from the state in that pursuit and will likely not abandon it. We have asked for \$20m from the state for the purpose of moving to R1.

Stephen Salter: We could become the first Hispanic serving institution in the state.

McPhee: That would put us in line for additional funding.

Joseph Morgan: Are we interested in adding new graduate programs?

McPhee: Absolutely. Not just to add but to add the right ones.

Sam Zaza: With the move from R3 to R2, do you expect a change in culture at the university from a teaching university to a teaching/research university?

McPhee: I don't see us as a "teaching only" university. That change has already taken place. It probably occurred in the first 5 years of my presidency.

Sam Zaza: Faculty feel that we are a teaching university.

McPhee: That is not the university stance.

Raj Srivastava: The teaching loads reflect that we are still a teaching university.

McPhee: That is not the case. If you are engaged in research and teaching 15 hours, let me know. I will strongly push back that this is not just a teaching university. The evidence is in the move from R3 to R2.

Michael Federici: It would be very helpful to faculty to increase the number of sabbaticals. Would you be open to a resolution from the Senate to increase the number of sabbaticals?

McPhee: Yes I would.

Suzanne Sutherland: Is there anything from a Board of Trustees perspective that we need to be aware of?

McPhee: Yes. A lot of work has been done over the past 4 or 5 years. The Board was concerned that we tenure too many people. We are in the middle of the pack in that regard. The Board thought we were overstaffed and wanted programs cut. The Board thought we were overcompensated. Those concerns seem to have calmed.

Michael Federici: We need a better defense when we play Alabama.

McPhee: We did well against Missouri. Alabama is good. But we did walk away with \$1.5 million.

Michelle Conceison: It can't be easy to defend MTSU in the legislature. What can we do to fight for ourselves?

McPhee: It is walking a fine line. They don't fully fund us, but they do "hold the purse". We must play fair without compromising our values. We are still trying to get the name off of Forest Hall. We will speak with boldness but not confrontationally.

Martha Norkunas: In the humanities, people are active and publishing in ways that do not generate monetary recognition for the university. Hopefully those contributions will be recognized and not devalued.

McPhee: I totally agree.

President McPhee gaveled us in at 4:26pm.

1. Approval of Minutes – this will be bumped until October
2. President's report – Kari began her report at 4:28pm and concluded at 4:40pm. (Refer to the President's report slides shared via email)
3. Budget Report
4. Election for CLA member to steering – nominees from CLA and voting  
Andrew Wyatt has a time conflict with steering meetings  
Joan McRae nominated Michael Federici. Michael accepted the nomination. Kari declared him a member of the steering committee.
5. Volunteers for the following:
  - a) Digital Badge Proposal Committee – up to 2 members  
<https://www.mtsu.edu/badges/>
  - b) True Blue Core liaison – 1 member
  - c) University Council on Sponsored Scholarship – 1 member who must have a record of scholarly/creative activity
6. Reports/new volunteers for committees
  - a) Academic Affairs – Resolution (see attachment) John Ouellette presented a resolution regarding faculty compensation for overload pay.  
Michael Federici: Faculty teaching 9 hours will not be paid to teach a 4<sup>th</sup> class. That is part of MTSU policy.  
Several people agreed.  
Sam Zaza: Why is the policy 15? FTT's teach 15.

Anjali: Everyone gets the magic 3. If you teach 9, the “overload” of 3 is considered as part of the 12 hour load.

Joan McRae: Sam, that goes back to your original assertion that we are still a teaching university in mindset.

Michael Federici: Becky Cole will say our proposal is crazy. We can’t afford to pay overloads at the lower rate currently.

Stephen Salter: The workload says 3/3 but then later says 4/4.

Raj Srivastava: What R2 university in the world teaches 4/4?

Kari Neely: I will send out various proposals.

Sam Zaza: Before we discuss the compensation, we have to define what is an overload.

Lisa: It is a recruiting disadvantage.

Francis Koti: Why do we say that we cannot afford to pay overload?

Stephen Salter: What we are really saying is that President will have to overrule the Provost who believes in 4/4.

Suzanne Sutherland: Are we planning a faculty-wide survey?

Kari Neely: We can and we are tasked with choosing a particular topic. This might just be it.

Stephen Salter: Do we know what other LGIs do?

Kari Neely: Yes that is in the proposal.

Larry Burriss: Standard teaching loads at Alabama are 12, Baylor 12.

Leigh Anne Clark: That can’t be the case though in practicality.

Raj Srivastava: Those are probably averages that include adjuncts.

Michelle: We need to gather data on how other universities handle this but also how they handle summer pay.

Andrea George: We need to vote next month.

Michelle: If we get that no, we can take it back to the departments.

Joan McRae: It will also help us understand what specific pushback we will get.

Suzanne Sutherland: It would be nice to have a theoretical timeline.

Kari Neely: Survey will take until spring.

Leigh Anne Clark: Why would it take that long?

Kari Neely: Workload issues with university survey makers.

Patrick McCarthy: It is a complex issue. The proposal helps clarify.

Joseph Morgan: What about the sabbatical question? Do we want to try to push that issue?

Michael Federici: We have tried that through the chairs council and it was unsuccessful.

- b) Faculty Engagement
- c) Faculty Advocacy
- d) AI
- e) Sustainability
- f) Faculty Handbook

- g) "Board" Committee
- h) Committee on Committees

7. What do we do with the sports tickets?

8. New Business

- a) Faculty Parking issues, i.e., lot closures
- b) Other topics from the floor

9. Adjourn – Jeremy Aber motioned, Raj Srivastava seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:03pm.

10. Reception at President McPhee's house to follow