

Minutes from the April Meeting of the Faculty Senate

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate was held on Monday, April 8, 2018 at 3:30 P.M. in the Faculty Senate Chambers, 100 James Union Building.

Attendance

Present: Tyler Babb, Kathryn Blankenship, Nita Brooks, Larry Burriss, Nancy Caukin, Laura Cochrane, Rick Cottle, Trevor de Clercq, Mamit Deme, Andrew Dix, Paul Eubanks, Rebecca Fischer, Justin Gardner, Joey Gray, Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand, Pippa Holloway, Paul Kline, Marcus Knight, Rachel Leander, Darren Levin, Melissa Lobegeier, Alfred Lutz, Preston MacDougall, Pamela Morris, John Mullane, Susan Myers-Shirk, John Pennington, Joshua Phillips, Ariana Postlethwait, Deana Raffo, Joan Raines, Michael Rice, Patrick Richey, James Robertson, Stephen Salter, Mary Ellen Sloane, Rajesh Srivastava, Sherri Stevens, Dennis Walsh, Elizabeth Wright.

Excused: Alan Boehm, Angela DeBoer, Bob Gordon, Shannon Harmon.

Absent: Vishwas Bedekar, James Chaney, Tricia Farwell, Nat Smith, Donald Snead, Moses Tesi.

Rebecca Fischer moved to approve the minutes from the March 11th meeting. The motion was adopted.

Senate Leadership Election

- Nita Brooks was elected to serve as faculty senate president for the 2020-2021 academic year.
- Deana Raffo was elected to serve as the faculty senate recording secretary for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Motions

1. Pippa Holloway moved on behalf of the Steering Committee to approve edits to the academic fresh start policy. The motion was adopted. The policy is included in the appendix of these minutes.
2. Pippa Holloway moved on behalf of the Steering Committee to approve a resolution proposing that adjunct faculty should be paid four times per semester. The motion was adopted. The resolution is included in the appendix of these minutes.
3. Pippa Holloway moved on behalf of the Steering Committee to endorse a policy on the renewal of chairs. The motion was adopted. The policy is included in the appendix of these minutes.
4. Pippa Holloway moved on behalf of the Steering Committee to approve a resolution on market salary adjustments at promotion. The motion was

adopted after amendment. The amended resolution is included in the appendix of these minutes.

5. Pippa Holloway moved on behalf of the Steering Committee to endorse a Tennessee United Faculty Senates (TUFS) resolution in support of early voting on college campuses. The motion was adopted. The resolution is included in the appendix of these minutes.

Reports

- The Academic Affairs Committee reported on concerns related to the new workload policy. Faculty members identified the following concerns.
 - There may be inequities in how the policy is implemented across departments.
 - Department chairs may be unfair in assigning release time.
 - The policy promotes quantity over quality of research.
 - Departments/faculty members may lack resources for the successful completion of non-instructional assignments.
 - The policy does not fully value graduate teaching and mentorship.Moving forward, the committee will conduct a discipline-based study of workload policies at other universities. This research will culminate in a report that will be part of the official Senate minutes. The Senate plans to table this issue at its next meeting so that it will be carried forward to the next congress.
- Rachel Leander reported on the Senate's budget. As of April 8, 2019, the Senate had at its disposal -\$152.27 for the purpose of travel and \$2,586.96 for other operating expenses. At the start of this academic year \$1,600 and \$5,380 were budgeted for travel and operating expenses, respectively.
- John Pennington reported on behalf of the Finance and Personnel Committee. In researching the importance of tenure, committee members answered the following questions:
 - Are there measurable financial benefits to tenure?
 - How has eliminating/weakening tenure impacted other universities?Dr. Pennington will assimilate committee member responses into a single report, which will be provided to the Senate and Trustee Mary Martin.

Discussion/Information

- Undergraduate retention standards/academic fresh start:
 - Revisions were motivated by concerns that the policy is being abused to artificially boost GPAs. Edits were designed to
 - improve rigor,
 - close loopholes that lower standards,
 - eliminate the number of waivers issued, and
 - eliminate unenforceable requirements.
- Chair term policy:
 - Several issues remain to be addresses:

- A handful of departments already have policy in place for the evaluation and renewal of chairs. How would this policy impact current departmental policy? For example, could departments implement term limits? Would the policy preempt department policy? Would the policy supplement, but not supersede departmental policy?
 - Should recommendation for reappointment come at the end of year three or the beginning of year 4?
 - Would all faculty be allowed to vote on the renewal of the chair, or would voting be limited to tenure/tenure-track faculty?
 - Like any policy, the legal office and the entire university will review the policy before it goes into effect.
 - The Dean of the College of Liberal arts requested that departments suspended votes on the renewal of chairs this year in light of this pending policy. However, this policy will not go into effect for some time.
 - One senator was concerned that departmental votes would be decided by nepotism between friends or a desire to maintain the status quo. This senator proposed that the University implement term limits.
 - This policy is an improvement to the current system for the evaluation of chairs in that it
 - makes the results of the department's vote public, and
 - limits interim chair terms to one year.
- Instructor salaries: The Dean's Cabinet approved the periodic reevaluation of instructor-track salaries. Instructors are entitled to have their salaries reevaluated every three years. The minutes of the Dean's Cabinet meeting are included in the appendix.
- Dennis Walsh moved that the University henceforth refer to a certain building as the R.O.T.C building. This resolution will go before the Steering Committee and then come before the Faculty Senate for a vote. John Pennington noted that there is a precedent for this; the president deemphasizes the State in MTSU. The resolution is included in the appendix of these minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 4:49 P.M.

Submitted by Rachel Leander, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary.

Appendix

314 Undergraduate Academic Retention Standards

Approved by President

Effective Date: June 5, 2017

Responsible Division: Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Student Success

Responsible Officer: Vice Provost for Student Success

I. Purpose

This policy establishes the minimum criteria for undergraduate academic retention standards at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University).

II. Establishment of Criteria

A. The Division of Academic Affairs will develop specific criteria, in compliance with this policy, to be implemented and enforced as the undergraduate academic retention standards of the institution.

B. The approved undergraduate academic retention standards shall be clearly expressed in the catalog, uniformly applied to all students, and promptly enforced at the close of each semester.

III. Quality Point System

A. The following quality point system is to be used in determining averages:

For each credit hour of A: 4 quality points

For each credit hour of B+: 3.33 quality points

For each credit hour of B: 3 quality points

For each credit hour of B-: 2.67 quality points

For each credit hour of C+: 2.33 quality points

For each credit hour of C: 2 quality points

For each credit hour of C-: 1.67 quality points

For each credit hour of D+: 1.33 quality points

For each credit hour of D: 1 quality point

For each credit hour of D-: 0.67 quality points

For each credit hour of F: 0 quality points

B. The quality point average (QPA) is determined by dividing the total number of quality points earned by the total number of credit hours which the student attempted except for credit hours in courses from which the student withdraws in good standing (see Section VI. Drop and Withdrawal Standards) or for courses in which the student receives grades such as pass/fail and which are not considered when determining the QPA.

C. Grades, which are not considered in computing the QPA, shall be described and explained in the catalog.

D. In addition, a statement shall be included within the catalog which limits the number of hours of such grades per semester and the maximum number of such hours a student may receive in toto.

E. Finally, a single student transcript will include term and cumulative QPA calculations, which ensure that MTSU treats remedial/developmental hours alike in calculating QPA. The transcript will include the following:

1. QPA composed only of hours taken in courses numbered 1000 and above (college only QPA) and
2. QPA composed of hours taken in courses numbered 100 and above and hours taken in remedial/developmental courses (combined QPA).

F. The following uses are based on each calculation:

1. College only QPA will be used in calculating the required QPA for graduation.
2. College only QPA will be used in determining graduation honors.
3. College only QPA will be used in determining term honors.
4. Combined QPA will be used in determining suspension and probation.
5. Combined QPA will be used in determining financial aid eligibility.

- 6. Combined QPA will be used in determining athletic eligibility.
- G. For the purpose of increasing mastery in a course, when such is necessary for successful performance in a subsequent course or for the purpose of increasing the quality point average (and only for these purposes), students may be permitted to repeat courses in which their final grades are "C" or lower.
- H. Courses may not be repeated more than twice (three [3] total attempts) unless the grades in the third and subsequent attempts are used in calculating the quality point average.
- I. Students may be permitted to repeat a course in which a grade of "B" or higher was earned only with the approval of the Provost as an exception to this policy.

IV. Retention Standards

- A. The minimum quality point average required to achieve the baccalaureate degree is 2.0.
- B. In addition, a student who fails during any term to attain a cumulative QPA at or above the level indicated below for the credit hours attempted will be placed on academic probation for the subsequent term.
- C. Required Semester System Cumulative Hours Attempted QPA:

14 and under:	no minimum QPA
15-29 hours attempted:	1.4 QPA
30-50 hours attempted:	1.7 QPA
51-67 hours attempted:	1.9 QPA
Above 67 hours attempted:	2.0 QPA

- D. At the end of the next term of enrollment, a student on academic probation who has failed to attain either the above cumulative standard or a 2.0 QPA for that term will be suspended for a minimum of one (1) term. The Summer term may not be counted as the term of suspension.

E. Suspended students may use [Policy 301 Admissions](#) to appeal for readmission.

V. Academic Fresh Start

A. Academic fresh start is a plan of academic forgiveness which allows undergraduate students who have experienced academic difficulty to make a clean start upon returning to college after an extended absence.

The academic fresh start allows eligible students to resume study without being penalized for his/her past unsatisfactory scholarship and signals the initiation of a new QPA and grade point average (GPA) to be used for determining academic standing.

B. Readmitted students who were formerly enrolled at MTSU as well as transfer students who meet institutional requirements for admission and who have been separated from all institutions of higher education for a minimum of four (4) years shall be eligible for the academic fresh start.

C. MTSU shall require that the transfer applicant's grade point average on transferable courses must be at least equal to that which MTSU requires for the readmission of its own students.

D. Applicants who do not meet the MTSU's standards may be admitted on scholastic probation. (See [Policy 301 Admissions](#).)

E. The provisions of academic fresh start require meeting the following minimum criteria:

1. Student Requirements:

a. Separation from all collegiate institutions for at least four (4) years.

b. **Has not previously earned a bachelor's degree.**

~~b.~~ C. Any time after the readmission or admission as a degree-seeking student, a formal application must be filed with the appropriate office, as identified in the appropriate MTSU catalog, requesting the academic fresh start and describing an academic plan.

2. Terms of the Academic Fresh Start

a. Once the student has satisfied the above requirements, MTSU may grant the academic fresh start. The student may be granted an academic fresh start only once.

b. The student's permanent record will remain a record of all work; however, courses taken and previously failed will be excluded from the calculation of the QPA/GPA. Courses with a "D" grade will also be excluded from the calculation when a grade of "C" or better is required in the student's current major. QPA, GPA, and credit hours will reflect courses for which passing grades were earned and retained.

(1) Retained grades will be calculated in the academic fresh start QPA/GPA.

~~(2) Courses with "D" or "F" grades must be repeated at MTSU when they are required in the student's current major. All remaining courses for the current degree objectives must be completed at MTSU. No transient credit will be accepted after invoking academic fresh start.~~

(3) The application of retained credit toward degree requirements will be determined by the requirements currently in effect at the time the academic renewal status is conferred on the student. Specific program regulations must also be met.

(4) Previously satisfied assessment and placement program requirements will not be forfeited.

3. Upon degree admission, academic fresh start applicants who did not satisfy assessment and placement program requirements at the time of previous enrollment and whose academic plan includes completion of a college-level English or mathematics course must meet current academic assessment and placement program requirements regarding enrollment in college English and mathematics courses.

4. The student's transcript will note that the academic fresh start was made and the date of the academic fresh start.

5. MTSU will honor an academic fresh start provision granted at another State of Tennessee institution. The student should also signify understanding that other institutions may not accept the QPA as it is calculated with the academic fresh start.

6. This policy is independent of financial aid regulations. Financial aid requirements at the time of application will apply. Therefore, an academic fresh start applicant shall be informed of the need to check with his/her financial aid counselor for guidance.

7. Once applied, Academic Fresh Start is irrevocable.

VI. Drop and Withdrawal Standards

A. After the official registration period is over, students may make adjustments in their schedule through the process of adding and/or dropping courses.

B. A student may drop or add a course by obtaining the approval of the appropriate administrators.

C. The last date for students to add or drop a course without a penalty is to be clearly indicated and expressed in the MTSU catalog.

D. At the discretion of the University, courses that are dropped within the add or drop period may be or may not be indicated on the student's transcript.

E. After the last day to add or drop a class without a penalty, and not later than two-thirds (2/3) into the semester, a student may officially drop a course(s) or withdraw from the University and receive a "W" or other appropriate symbol/grade.

F. In general, such symbol/grade counts as no hours attempted.

1. After two-thirds (2/3) of the semester is complete, a student may drop a course(s) or withdraw from the University without a mandatory grade of "F" only after having established the existence of unavoidable circumstances.

2. In such cases, it is the responsibility of the appropriate university administrators or faculty to determine the grade the student is to receive, which could be an "F".

3. Statements describing this process shall be clearly shown in the catalog.

4. MTSU shall develop institutional guidelines outlining specific types of conditions or hardships which will be considered as acceptable.

G. Students who desire to drop a course(s) or withdraw from the university before the end of a semester must make a formal application in the appropriate administrative office of the University which will be so defined in the catalog.

H. If for any reason a student does not officially drop a course(s) or withdraw from the University, the student will receive an "F" for each course(s) involved.

Forms: none.

Revisions: none.

References: Policy 301 Admissions.

Resolution on adjunct pay

WHEREAS, adjunct faculty at MTSU are paid three times per semester. In the Fall semester they are paid at the end of October, November, and December. In the Spring semester they are paid at the end of February, March, and April.

RESOLVED: The Faculty Senate recommends that MTSU compensate adjunct four times per semester by adding a September and January pay period.

Department Chair Evaluation and Appointment Policy

I. Purpose

This policy establishes renewable, unlimited terms for department chairs, the criteria upon which they will be evaluated, and procedures for re-appointing and replacing them.

II. Definitions

Department chairs: For purposes of this policy, “department chair” is understood to include directors who function as chairs for their programs.

Term: The four-year period for which the chair is appointed to serve.

III. Evaluation

A formal evaluation of the department chair is conducted every year, in the second half of the spring semester for the first three years of the chair's term. Prior to the evaluation, the chair shall report to the department their activities and accomplishments over the course of the academic year.

All full-time department faculty members will complete the evaluation using the designated online instrument, which shall provide the opportunity to make open-ended comments.

Criteria for evaluation are as follows:

- a. Leadership and decision making
- b. Planning, organization, and responsiveness
- c. Interpersonal relations
- d. Oral and written communication
- e. Promotion of professional growth and scholarly productivity
- f. Service to department and community

The dean will transmit the evaluation results to the department faculty.

In the fourth year of the department chair's term, in addition to an evaluation, tenured and tenure-track faculty will vote on a recommendation for reappointment.

When a department chair decides not to continue in the position, no evaluation takes place.

3. Appointment and term of department chairs

The initial term of appointment for a department chair will be four (4) years. Department chairs shall inform the dean whether they will seek another term by April 1 in the third year of the department chair's term.

If the department chair decides to seek reappointment, and if the dean agrees, the procedures for reappointment shall be followed.

4. Reappointment of department chairs

Department chairs are recommended for reappointment through a vote of tenured and tenure-track department faculty. The department's tenure and promotion committee(s) will administer the vote in accordance with department procedures between April 15 and the end of the semester in the third year of the department chair's term. The vote tally and recommendation will be made available to members of the department and communicated to the dean. The dean may approve the faculty recommendation and forward the tally, comments, and recommendation to the provost. If the dean or provost does not approve the faculty recommendation, the dean and/or provost will issue a statement explaining the decision to the department faculty.

The dean, with the provost's approval, may initiate either an internal selection process or a national search for the next department chair if (1) the department chair decides not to seek reappointment or (2) if the department faculty does not recommend reappointment and the dean accepts the recommendation.

5. Internal selection process

For an internal search, the dean shall request nominations of candidates from department faculty. The department's promotion and tenure committee(s) will hold an election in accordance with department procedures in which all tenured or tenure-track faculty are eligible to vote, except those who will not be reappointed or have been given terminal notice.

The vote tally and recommendation will be made available to the department faculty and communicated to the dean. The dean may approve the faculty recommendation and forward the tally and recommendation to the provost. If the dean or provost does not approve the faculty recommendation, the dean and/or provost will issue a statement explaining the decision to the faculty. If the dean rejects the faculty recommendation, the department may hold another election and recommend a different candidate. The provost shall make the final decision.

6. External search

Department, college, and university hiring practices shall be followed. The chair of the search committee shall be the chair of another department, preferably in the same college.

All tenured or tenure-track faculty, except those who will not be reappointed or have been given terminal notice are eligible to vote.

The vote tally and recommendation will be made available to members of the department and communicated to the dean. The dean may approve the faculty recommendation and forward the results, including the vote tally and comments, to the provost. If the dean or provost does not approve the faculty recommendation, the dean and/or provost will issue a statement to the faculty explaining the decision. If the dean rejects the faculty recommendation, the department may hold another election and recommend a different candidate. The provost shall make the final decision.

7. Interim department chairs

When a department chair position is temporarily vacated for one year or less, or during the search for a permanent replacement, an interim chair may be appointed by the dean. Interim chairs shall ordinarily be chosen from faculty within the appropriate department, and the term of office shall be no longer than one year although this term may be renewed for an additional year under extenuating circumstances. During the interim department chair's term, the department must carry out an internal selection process or an external search.

8. Vote of No Confidence

Under exceptional circumstances, members of the faculty within a department may ask that a department chair be dismissed based on a two-thirds majority vote of no confidence. In such rare instances, the dean will consult with the faculty to understand the basis for the request, to ascertain the extent of support for a change in department chair, and to resolve the underlying department issues. If the underlying issues are not resolved to the satisfaction of the dean or a majority of the department, the dean may dismiss or not reappoint the department chair.



Faculty Senate
P.O. Box 921
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN 37132
(615) 898-2582

DATE

Dear Dr. McPhee,

In June 2018 MTSU Board of Trustees approved a revised faculty compensation plan that provided across-the-board salary increase of 1.5% or \$500 (whichever is greater) for all full-time MTSU employees on the payroll as of June 30, 2018. In addition, the board approved market adjustments for all tenured and tenure-track faculty members whose salary falls below the average of the 2014-15 CUPA reported salary. Available funding allowed the University to provide these faculty members an increase to 37% of the gap between the actual salary and the predicted market salary using the 2014-15 CUPA data.

These adjustments represent an important improvement in faculty compensation. But more needs to be done. Several departments have recently lost vital faculty members and are at risk of losing additional faculty at the junior, mid-career, and senior level, a significant number of whom are actively seeking other positions because of MTSU's uncompetitive salaries. Most will probably not accept or seek counteroffers if they are successful, as they do not wish to damage their professional reputations by applying for jobs they don't intend to take.

In the spirit of shared governance, the faculty senate recommends a revision to the compensation plan. At present, faculty members receive flat raises at promotion. **We recommend that on promotion to a new rank, a faculty member's salary should be adjusted upward by the current flat rate or to the minimum of the new rank's salary range, as determined by applying the 2018 market salary methodology to the most recent CUPA data, whichever is greater. We recommend that this start with fall 2018 promotion submissions.**

We recognize that under this proposal, the primary benefit is improvement to the salary levels for those moving to associate professor or full professor. We acknowledge this does not address salary inversion and compression, but this is an important step toward the University's goal of improving faculty salaries across the board.

This revision will provide for more equitable compensation to faculty members who have successfully completed the rigorous review required for promotion. In

addition, it will keep overall salaries closer to the market average, preventing MTSU salaries from lagging so far behind.

Sincerely,

Pippa Holloway
Professor of History
Faculty Senate President, 2018-2019
Middle TN State University

Resolution Supporting Early Voting Polling Places on College Campuses

March 31, 2019

WHEREAS, Governor Bill Lee has called for more emphasis on civics education; and,

WHEREAS, the Tennessee University Faculty Senates represents over 10,000 faculty members at public, four-year institutions across Tennessee; and,

WHEREAS, as educators in this state, we encourage students to be productive citizens who are engaged in their communities; and,

WHEREAS, understanding and exercising the right to vote for those who enjoy that right is a key element in participating in American democracy; and,

WHEREAS, convenient access to a polling place encourages citizens to cultivate practices of voting and life-long participation in the democratic process; and,

WHEREAS, students may choose to declare their university place of residence as their permanent address; and,

WHEREAS, we support the goal of increasing voter participation across the state;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Tennessee University Faculty Senates supports efforts to provide early voting polling places on university campuses for use by all county residents.

On the periodic reevaluation of instructor-track salaries: excerpt from the Deans' Cabinet Meeting.

the pre-reqs to take the summer class. Some years we've had one week buffer; other years the Summer term begins the same day grades are due for Spring. 25% of students were purged on first purge date when classes started the Monday after Spring Graduation. We can't purge by part of term. There's no way to pick and choose who gets purged based on when their summer term begins per Bursar. Summer purge dates are for all. Some financial aid (Hope) can't be awarded until grades are in. Many students can't pay out-of-pocket ahead of time.

Deans expressed concern about reducing summer options for students who need to graduate. We should think about more options (holiday intersession?) and convenience in this age of declining enrollment. Dean Urban distributed VCU's summer schedule. They have similar students (similar financial aid).

No support from the deans for a post-Memorial Day start. Requested to rework schedule for one week break after May graduation. Also, consider more options like a 12-week session (Four 3-week sessions and two 5 or 6 weeks sessions). Tyler Henson will come back to Deans' Cabinet.

III. Faculty and Staff Evaluation of Deans: change from IDEA to Campus Labs?

Deans approved move to Campus Labs for their evaluations by faculty and staff.

IV. Calendar for Faculty Renewal; Pre-Tenure, Tenure, and Promotion Review; and Annual Evaluation – *tabled to next meeting*

V. Announcements

Full-time Temporaries (FTTs) Salary Review – Becky Cole and Mark Byrnes

Market adjustments to salary have been limited to tenured and tenure-track faculty. For FTT faculty members and faculty members on track appointments (clinical, coordinator, research), MTSU has reevaluated their salaries every three years when the position was searched or when the faculty member was beginning a new three-year cycle. The Provost's Office will continue to follow this protocol and apply it to instructor-track positions as well. For non-tenured faculty, salary will be evaluated (based on years of experience and degree) at the time a person is hired following a full-time temporary search or every three years for faculty on track appointments. Deans approved.

Digital Measures – we are still looking for early adopters for tenure and promotion online review. We have many from the College of Business. Need other colleges.

Chairs term limits policy - Provost wanted to set expectations for chairs' term lengths. In CLA they varied. Looking for standardization. Dr. Torsney has worked with chairs and faculty to create a policy forthcoming. We have ignored the policies in place if the chairs were liked, and we want to enforce the policies if chairs were not liked. It is healthy for organizations to review leaders at a certain number of years.

Provost showed **sidewalk and floor signs** that will be used temporarily to guide students and visitors.

Budget Overview - Net operating appropriations, which includes adjustments made through the funding formula, will increase by \$3.8 million. While the preliminary recommendation is for a tuition increase in the range of 0-2.5%, the final range will not be issued until early May by THEC.

[President's email from 3/5/19.](#)

Resolution on the R.O.T.C building

Submitted by Dennis Walsh, Mathematical Sciences:

Given that the current name of the R.O.T.C building on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University is deeply offensive to a large segment of the University community and given that the University has been thwarted in its attempt to legally change the name of said building, the Faculty Senate of Middle Tennessee State University recommends that the University administration henceforth refer to the building as the "R.O.T.C. Building". These references shall include those of speech, of written communications, of signage, and of campus map listings. We believe that the State Historical Commission has no legal control over such free speech, and the University is not officially changing the name to which the State Historical Commission is so attached.