

FacSen
20230213

The regular meeting of the MTSU Faculty Senate was called to order Feb. 13, 2023 at 3:30 in the Senate Chambers by President Salter.

Members present: Jeremy Aber, Rafet Al-Tobasei, Jacob Avila, Vaughn Barry, Vishwas Bedekar, Larry Burriss, Lando Carter (via Zoom), Leigh Anne Clark, Michelle Conceison, Claire Cook (via Zoom), Douglas Dabbs (via Zoom), Elizabeth Dalton, Andrea Dawson, Laura Dubek (via Zoom), Tricia Farwell (via Zoom), Michael Federici, Andrea Georgiou (via Zom), Robert Gordon, Lisa Green, Jeannie Harrington, Samantha Johnson, Renee Jones (via Zoom), Kyle Kennedy, Rachel Kirk (via Zoom), Francis Koti, Preston MacDougall, Patrick McCarthy, Joan McRae, Kay Murphree, Kari Neely, David Nelson, Suman Neupane, Keely O'Brien, Todd O'Neill, John Ouellette, Sharon Parente (via Zoom), Alicia Pence (via Zoom), Michael Principe (via Zoom), Patrick Richey (via Zoom), Jim Rost, Dianna Rust (via Zoom), Stephen Salter, Saleh Sbenaty, Philip Seagraves (via Zoom), Xiaowei Shi, Raj Srivastava, Suzanne Sutherland, Andrew Wyatt

Members Absent: Carmelita Dotson,

Members Excused: Amy Harris, Ben Stickle

Minutes from the Dec. 5, 2022, Faculty Senate meeting were unanimously approved.

President's Report:

The governor's upcoming higher education budget includes no money for new buildings, but some money for building completion and repair.

One-third of maintenance requests were funded.

There will be no real growth in operating funds.

THEC is apparently returning to "the formula" for tuition increase.

There will possibly be a tuition increase, but probably no more than 3%.

Vice president Alan Thomas is working on possible pay increases.

The governor approved a 5% pay raise but only funded 55%, so MTSU will have to make up the difference.

A change in the master plan proposal for an on-campus hotel was approved, but no approval for the actual building.

A question from the floor asked how the new budget will impact the Shelbyville/MTSU airport project. The project was funded last year so is not affected by this year's budget.

The project was also approved by Shelbyville airport commission.

There are on-going multiple changes across the LGIs (Land Grant Institutions), but there had been no real lobbying on their behalf (particularly for MTSU) until Bill Ketron assumed the role of legislative liaison.

It appears the governor's desire to improve Tennessee's infrastructure will also result in the TCAT (Tennessee College of Applied Technology) system receiving significant funding.

Although there has been no discussion by the MTSU administration of possible layoffs, in an effort to maintain a balanced budget new hiring will probably be limited.

Preview Day was a success, with numerous parents and potential student expressing an interest in attending MTSU.

Due to excessive growth there were unofficial comments that UT-K is deferring enrollments.

Most alumni donations go to athletics.

Workloads should be 3/3 but actual teaching loads are left to discretion of department chairs.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Affairs (John Ouellette):

Discussion of ChatGPT. It was generally agreed there are benefits to students learning how to use the program, but it is also subject to abuse specifically with regard to term papers and projects.

Average workload across the campus is 9/9. The mandated workload is 15 hours per semester, but 3 hours are automatically allocated to advising.

Average SCH/faculty member is 219. By way of comparison, Aerospace average workload is 10.8, resulting in 521 sch/faculty. Criminal Justice average workload is 11.5, but student credit hour production is low.

Overloads are often not "voluntary," and faculty are generally "voluntold" for extra classes.

Most common scenario is that classes must be covered or students will not graduate so faculty agree to teach an overload.

Athletics (Suzanne Sutherland):

The Faculty-Staff Appreciation basketball game last week (the second in the series) honored the College of Education.

President McPhee wants Faculty Senate to look at ways to increase participation.

Committee on Committees (Kari Neely):

There are 350 standing committee positions that need to be filled each year.

It is often the same people who serve.

The committee met with Amy Aldrich Sanford, vice provost for academic affairs, who thinks some committees are too large to really be effective.

There needs to be a review of committee size in addition to the five-year mandatory review of each committee.

Finance Committee (Michael Federici)

Committee member Anne Anderson has left MTSU, but will not be replaced until next year

The committee will meet with Vice President Alan Thomas soon to review the budget for next year.

The committee would like Senate direction for discussions of pay raises.

Some 118 faculty members have not gotten equity raises. Why?

There was discussion of formula used for equity pay raises.

Can we get the name of those who are below market equity?

Sustainability Committee (Jeremy Aber):

MTSU needs a standing university committee on sustainability.

Senator Aber and the committee are working on a draft committee plan.

Board of Trustee Presentations

Bob Gordon and Mary Martin gave formal presentations and answered questions.

Electronic ballots will be distributed shortly after this meeting adjourns, and should be returned by 7 p.m.

Senate President Salter met with Provost Mark Byrnes to discuss alternate delivery methods due to mid-semester faculty illness or injury. The provost would like to see a Senate resolution as a starting point for discussion.

Here is the issue: Students enroll in an on-ground class. The instructor suffers an illness or injury mid-semester would like to continue the class, but in an on-line or Zoom manner.

In an actual occurrence, the faculty member offered to teach the class via Zoom, but was told they would have to take sick leave, without pay.

President Salter sent information about pay-for-promotion to senators, and Provost Byrnes has discussed the issue with President McPhee. We may try to replicate how pay-on-promotion is done at Tennessee Technological University, which is significantly more than we offer at MTSU.

Several options were proposed, several of which have already been rejected by the administration, but no formal motion was forthcoming.

The comment was made, Quiet negotiations seem to work better than direct action.

Senator Andrea Georgiou noted Curriculog seems to allow proposals to go directly to department chair, by-passing the department committee. This should be discussed at next week's meeting with Provost Byrnes.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Larry L. Burriss, Recording Secretary