

## **Faculty Senate Meeting April 10, 2023**

The April 10, 2023 meeting of the MTSU Faculty Senate was called to order by Senate President Stephen Salter at 3:30 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Jacob Avila, Kay Murphree, Jim Rost, Andrew Wyatt

Members Excused: Amy Harris, Kyle Kennedy, Saleh Sbenaty, Xiaowei Shi,

Minutes from the March 2023, Faculty Senate meeting were unanimously approved.

### **President's Report:**

Faculty Senate President Stephen Salter met this morning for the regular MTSU President's Cabinet meeting.

Enrollments are holding steady, with freshman applications increasing but transfer applications are flat. Graduate enrollments are stable.

Admits and enrollments are up significantly, but final figures won't be in until late August when classes actually begin.

A College of Media and Entertainment ad is scheduled to run during the upcoming NHL playoffs, if the Nashville Predators make the playoffs.

The ad will also run during April 29 CMT/Judd concerts.

There was discussion of classroom safety, with particular concern that there is no standard classroom door locking system.

There is apparently some confusion about the upcoming raises.

The Dean's cabinet said the raise would be a full 5%, across the board. President McPhee, however, said the raise would be 3.2% across the board with an additional 1.8% market adjustment, depending on Fall 2023 enrollments. The 3.2% proposal will go to the Board of Trustees at their June meeting but there is no indication if the 1.8% will be discussed.

Dr. McPhee will come to the Senate meeting in May to "close out" the academic year and may want to discuss the raise proposals.

Tennessee Gov. Lee amended the state budget last week, but there were no additional funds for higher education.

Budget cuts at the University have been “mild,” but there may be additional cuts if Fall 2023 enrollments do not meet projections.

President Salter was asked if we are dealing with the applications vs. admits vs. enrollments issues we faced last year.

We are about even with transfers, although the focus is on entering freshmen.

There was discussion at the cabinet of lowering entrance requirements so more students would apply. The administration is currently taking a “wait and see” approach.

President Elect Kari Neely asked about the impact of minors on budgets and the relationship among minors/required courses/approved minors/course of study within a department.

There is concern we may be out of compliance with federal Department of Education requirements. Apparently under DoE guidelines, if courses or a minor do not count towards graduation, then those credits may not be covered by federal aid, which only covers a “course of study” towards a degree. If a department does not have a minor, then “extra” courses will have to be applied somewhere else in a student’s program in order for them to receive federal aid. In other words, if courses are within a “course of study” financial aid will be approved. Courses outside the “course of study” might not be approved for financial aid.

Almost half of our majors do not require a minor.

Senator Rachel Kirk: Are we cutting budgets in order to reach 5% raise?

President Salter: Yes.

President McPhee is to address Senate in May, and may ask the senators what they think about the raise situation, recalling that last year the Senate evenly split between two different raise proposals.

## Committee Reports

John Ouellette (Academic Affairs Committee): The committee approved the Sustainability Committee proposal for a standing MTSU Sustainability Committee.

A questionnaire dealing with workloads was sent to all faculty, with fewer than 30 responses. The committee will restart in Fall.

There is, nevertheless, apparently widespread misunderstanding about release time, how to apply etc.

Kari Neely(Committee on Committees): The committee is sending suggestions to reduce the number of standing committees to Amy Aldridge, vice provost for academic programs.

Senate executive Aide Anjali Sarvaria is working to fill MTSU standing committees.

Michael Federici & Jeannie Harrington (Finance Committee). See attached report.

182 faculty members did not receive market adjustments.

Promotion raises do have an impact on the funding available for across-the-board raises. When faculty receive job offers from other institutions MTSU usually does not try to match their new salary offers.

When deans step down they receive 80% of their dean salary; their salary does not go back to market.

On the subject of faculty buy-outs, vice president for business and finance Alan Thomas believes they do not work to reduce overall salary budgets. They were tried in 2010 and were not particularly effective.

There is apparently some confusion over post-retirement teaching. The plan seems to be that the faculty member has to actually retire and then be approved for a one-year contract to teach a 5/5 load at 50% of salary

There is currently an semi-unofficial hiring freeze, depending on Fall 2023 enrollments, and departments cannot use full time temporaries (FTT) to fill tenure track positions. Departments requesting full-time-temporary positions need to justify the 5/5 teaching load

Question: What is the budget for the new General Education implementation, and is payment for legacy courses different from new course development?

#### ADDENDUM RE MTSU ON-LINE

The subject of MTSU On-Line was discussed at the President's Cabinet this morning, followed by a long discussion in the Senate meeting this afternoon.

It appears many departments are creating new on-line courses, but marketing them seems to be limited (there was also discussion of what appears a general feeling there is inadequate marketing of the University in general).

President McPhee and the Provost apparently do not agree on the overall role and scope of on-line courses and programs, which the President sees as a good source of student enrollment (and thus fee income).

We apparently know how many students are enrolled in on-line courses, but there are no numbers for on-line only. In addition, it appears many on-line students are from the general area of the sponsoring campus, rather than from more distant locations. That is, students seem to prefer to enroll in on-line courses taken from a near-by institution rather than taking courses from a more distant school.

There is informal, but general, feeling students in general prefer on-ground courses, but this data is, of course, open to interpretation (some would say "spin"). One popular position is that students may prefer on-line, but still want some kind of presence on the actual campus. This would, of course, work against totally on-line programs since there would be little to no actual contact with the campus and campus life.

There was a wide-ranging discussion by the Senate, as expected, with positions ranging from no need for on-line courses to those who particularly favor entire programs being on-line. There are obviously a number of variations.

At least one Senator voiced concern that the Senate should not be solving the Provost's on-line problems. The Senate can make recommendations, but it is up to the administration to actually solve any problems.

A related subject is an MTSU "presence" in Nashville. President McPhee apparently does not favor an extensive presence in Nashville, although some departments have varying levels of contact.

*Respectfully Submitted*  
*Larry L. Burriss, Recording Secretary*