



Faculty Senate

Academic Affairs Liaison

Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2009
3:00 p.m.
President's Conference Room

Members Present

A. Lutz, C. Frost, D. Belcher, R. Heinrich, H.W. Means, L. Warise, S. Taylor, W. Cribb, T. Greer, S. Seipel

Members Absent

B. Haskew, L. Burriss, M. Arndt, P. Fischer, K. Rushlow

Members Excused

J. Dooley

Additional Attendees

Dr. Diane Miller, Mr. John Cothorn

Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

Deborah Belcher, 2009-2010 Faculty Senate President, called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. in the President's Conference Room.

Positioning the University for the Future: Dr. Miller

Dr. Miller welcomed and thanked the Faculty Senate and Academic Liaison Committee for their contributions to shared governance.

- **Positioning the University for the Future**

- There are many items in the report that require recommendations to be made by the Interim Executive Vice President & Provost to the President. Many of those recommendations require collaboration with other divisions on campus. Last May, Dr. Miller was given a list of Faculty Senators willing to serve on task committees. Not all of those faculty members were called upon during the summer in order to be considerate of academic schedules. Nonetheless, she assured the Academic Liaison Committee that reports are being discussed at all levels to ensure shared governance and that D. Belcher was either on some of the committees or given an opportunity to comment on reports submitted.

- Two of the reports/proposals submitted during the summer have been signed by the President because those required implementation at the beginning of this semester.
 - The first dealt with reducing paper use in labs. The solution was implementation of GoPrint software to manage printing. One feature of the software limits the number of pages a student can print.
 - Though there are limitations in place, students may ask a lab manager for permission to print additional pages.
 - Alumni and the public will be included in people allowed to print, but printing by these groups will be limited just like students.
 - To be more environmentally aware and less wasteful, D. Miller suggested that it is a change of culture as we will perhaps apply this or some other incentive to administration, faculty, and staff to be more aware of what they print and when.
 - The second report dealt with the Glenn Levin Estate, and its implementation as part of TN Heritage Group. The recommendation was for the University to look at how to utilize that property in some way. It is rich for cultivation by the Center for Historic Preservation. Dr. Allen worked with Dr. Van West to prepare a report that has since been approved by the President.
- It was brought to Dr. Miller's attention that faculty are concerned about the administration's justification for its decisions, specifically which have actual cost savings.
 - Dr. Miller agreed that some proposals do not have a cost savings figure. There may not be one or it might be a cost savings down the line. In particular, college reorganization might not be a cost savings. She discussed that Dr. McPhee said from the very beginning that MTSU needed to focus on Positioning the University for the Future hand in hand with budget cuts.
 - Mr. Cothorn stated that changes need to be made to improve what we are doing, even if there is no immediate savings.
- Operational v. Academic
 - A continued concern by faculty is the President's statement that most restructuring is viewed as operational not academic. Operational decisions, as the President stated at the open forum last spring, are administration's decisions and do not require faculty input. Faculty request that "operational" be defined.
 - Dr. Miller did not recall this statement and prefers that it be addressed directly by the president.
 - However, she did state, in her opinion, operational is what happens between planning and outcome, in other words, day to day operations are operational.

- Academic Affairs is in charge of planning classes, preparing classes, and assessing classes, and these tasks all fall under operational. Faculty are allowed to give input at all phases of the process, so faculty do have a means to be involved with all decisions, even if those issues blur the lines between “operational” and “academic.”
- Participation in the conversation has been and continues to be a conversation. In September and October, effected departments can meet with Dr. Miller for continued input.
- Additional information and announcements concerning the report timeline are about 2 weeks behind, but will be provided soon.

Budget: Mr. Cothorn

- State Operating Budget
 - The operating budget from the state is only \$99M. The \$19M cut, and adjustment for money that was held back last year, \$15 of \$17M, is operating.
 - Department budgets at beginning of July 1st, 2009, were exactly the same as last year. Going ahead, there will be cuts based on anticipated cuts.
- Fee Increases
 - \$6.6M was earned from tuition increases, but off the top of that the University had to pay for fixed costs including scholarships, faculty promotions, and fringe benefits changes. Other money was set aside for new initiatives including the new PhDs. The tuition increase still leaves us \$14M short. We are using Federal restoration and recovery money to cover this.
 - There is a 5% FTE enrollment growth, this will generate \$5.5-\$6M in earnings. The cost increase will be used to fund new faculty lines and other growth costs. Becky Cole is finalizing that data, and it looks to be 15 or 20 new lines of full time temps.
 - Because of the significant enrollment growth, MTSU may incur additional costs including hiring a new counselor and new financial aid person. None of the enrollment growth money has been allocated yet.
- Base Budget Cut from State
 - The most significant news is that there will be another 6% base budget cut of approximately \$4.5M from the State (this could be more, especially if TBR doesn't equally distribute the cut). Prudent budgeting requires holding money in anticipation of this.
 - In previous cuts, every dollar was used to cover the cost and hold Academic Affairs harmless. That will likely change as we move forward. Administration did not have budget hearings with the Deans and VPs to allow them to ask for additional money. If federal stimulus money was not available this year, we would have “draconian” cuts,

- but we hope that the operations changes combined with new revenue will mitigate this before July 1, 2011.
- Senators and Administration warns that there may be a day when the State no longer supports higher education. This needs to be in our sights. MTSU may have to be self supporting. As of about 3 years ago, student fees have been used to cover more of MTSU's budget than state support. Nonetheless, the State remains critical in supporting capital initiatives including the science building and waiver of taxes.
 - Debt Service/Bonding to Fund Science Building
 - Question: Did UTC use debt service/bonds to build its new library?
 - Mr. Cothorn was not aware of this, but says we would not want to use debt service to build the science building. It is our #1 capital project and also THEC's #1 capital project. It would increase student fees \$240 per semester to shift that cost to students.
 - Fewer Faculty to Teach More Students
 - A concern of faculty is the fact that MTSU will require fewer faculty members to teach more students.
 - Mr. Cothorn agreed that teaching more students with fewer faculty members will result in cost savings. This is very likely to occur.
 - Athletics Cost to University
 - Question: Some Universities are making cuts to Athletics. What are the actual costs of athletics at MTSU? Why is that not transparent in the budget? What are the revenues of athletics?
 - Mr. Cothorn stated that this information is in the budget which can be found in the Library and the Faculty Senate office. 3 sources of income support their \$16.5M budget.
 - student athletic fee
 - general fund support amount
 - Athletic game guarantees, fundraising, NCAA \$, etc.
 - Changes to Tenure Policy in Light of Increased Teaching Load
 - A primary concern of faculty members is that everyone (including Administration) will sacrifice to make the budget cuts happen. We know faculty positions will be lost and workloads will go up. What is the discussion about the impact on Tenure and Promotion policies over the near and distant future?
 - Dr. Miller: This is an issue for L. Burris to bring to TBR.
 - Filling Vacant Lines
 - Question: Who will replace retiring faculty?
 - Dr. Miller: 34 vacant lines were not filled last year. Those were offered up in cuts only because the lines were not filled by people, so there was no loss to any actual person. There needed to be a strategic discussion to look at those lines because some needed filling with tenure track lines. There were conversations with Deans and tough decisions were made. As a result, searches have been posted for 17 or 18 positions based on the result of the discussions.

- International Students and the Budget
 - Question: What is the effect of International student exchange on the budget?
 - Dr. Miller: Exchanges should result in a \$0 balance. International students pay tuition and fees at their home institution. When they are here, MTSU provides the services they need. When an MTSU student goes abroad, the MTSU student pays tuition and fees here and that covers the cost of hosting the international student incurred by MTSU. We may be out of balance for some time because it is harder to get MTSU students to go abroad than to get International students to come here, but we will catch up.
 - Dr. Miller: International students, not on exchange, pay the full out of state fees and no scholarships are provided. This generates income for MTSU. Some apply for and receive assistantships just like any MTSU student. MTSU values the diversity and revenue this provides.
- Budget Cuts
 - Question: Will proposed changes with corresponding budget impact figures be available?
 - Mr. Cothorn: MTSU is already making some tough decisions, but when we know more, there will be disclosures. We have already re-bid our custodial contract to reduce costs. It is going to be a 2 year process to meet the cuts, and it will be accelerated with the proposed costs.
 - Mr. Cothorn offered to come to any meeting to explain the budget issues with the Senate.
- Status of Proposed PhD's
 - Mr. Cothorn: These are still at THEC. Discussions continue about getting those approved. These are being held as long as there are discussions about reorganization of higher education in TN.

Adjournment

D. Belcher adjourned the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie Taylor
2009-2010 Faculty Senate Recording Secretary

Edited: D. Belcher

- **Addendum**
 - via email, 9-17-09, from John Cothorn
 - The UTC library project is being funded by State appropriation via the capital program. It is their Student Wellness Center that is being funded with student fees just as our Health and Wellness Center is being funded.