

**Faculty Liaison Meeting
Academic Affairs Meeting
October 08, 2008**

Attended –D. Belcher, L. Burris, J. Cain, J. Dowdy, C. Higgins, N. Kelker, A. Lutz, M. Martin, H.S. Means, K. Rushlow, K. Smith, S. Taylor, L. Warise

Excused - M. Balachandran, B. Haskew

Absent – None

Also attended – D. Miller, K. Gebert

I. Comments from Provost Gebert.

A. Budget information –

1. President's announcement this morning indicates the state for a \$3.2 M reversion. It is to be held by the state, but we do not expect to receive any back. It is unfortunate, but has been anticipated by the administration and they have identified ways to meet this requirement. This means MTSU has lost about \$10M, about 9% of the total budget as planned for 08-09. Note: some of the new tuition dollars are being used to cover this requirement. This may (probably will) extend into next year. There will be a committee established to start looking at re-focus and enhancement in the midst of these problems. The administration is fully supporting the academic core of the campus mission.
2. Fortunately, this was an across the board cut, not prorated by some other formula. Other institutions have more difficulty, due to lack of reserve funds left over from the last budget cuts and loss of student enrollment. We should be in shape for the spring. As an institution, we do not get a big drop-off from fall to spring so we should be stable for the rest of the year. There is no anticipation of layoffs for faculty or staff for the spring.
3. In February, the planning environment for income and immutable expenses is sent to Deans for planning purposes. The money for the education building are still allocated; bringing in rainy day dollars has still not been calculated and may be used to provide a cushion. At this time, there is no expectation of spring surprises, but the national economy is still at question. It may be difficulty for students to access student loan sources. This may be a problem for next fall.
4. The Foundation accounts are invested fairly conservatively and are stable at this point. In general, Tennessee is a stable institution compared to the experiences of other states in our region.
5. The cuts are probably permanent and we will find it necessary to make changes that are long-term. Discussions about a new college structure are still continuing; this would be permanent planning and with implementation dependent on new, better budget plans. Please be alert to any opportunities to increase efficiency and savings and suggest ideas to the administration.

B. Veteran Students -

1. Challenges of integrating veteran students
The following is an excerpt from a faculty member's e-mail concerning this issue:
So, I'd like to add an agenda item concerning how we serve vets and how the faculty can be trained or prepared to deal with this growing student population, many of

whom will have physical and psychological ailments that will present challenges to teachers and administrators.”

2. This may be a source of additional opportunities and funds and grants. MTSU has a reputation of being a good place for veterans. We have on-going initiative to continue improving the user-friendliness for veterans.

3. We can address meeting the needs of veterans and their families through looking at degree programs that are central to the experiences of the veterans and also addressing the issues of instate tuition for veterans and their family members.

C. Tenure & Promotion Policies -

1. **Policy Dates:** From a faculty member’s e-mail: “...there are faculty members coming up for tenure and/or promotion who are concerned that the policies governing their careers do not seem to have been finalized (no implementation date). Can we call this to the attention of the proper individuals so that they can fix (seems like it ought to be simple) the problem.”

a) **Response** – This stems from the changes to the current policy; there is by definition only one policy existing at a time and it is the policy as posted.

2. **Deadlines:** From a faculty member’s e-mail: “The tight deadlines at the beginning of the school year have caused some problems for us [Journalism] with someone who's going up. There's not really adequate time to constitute a committee, select reviewers, get stuff out and give them adequate time to respond without really imposing, especially if the outside reviewers are on a school year that starts later. At the other end, I know when I went up, I got my letter from Dr. McPhee sometime in the middle of the school year, but TBR didn't act till June. Seems the initial deadlines need revisiting. Even a couple of weeks would help.”

a) **Response** - This calendar allows for the tenure candidates maximum time to essentially know their status so that they have the time to respond. The Board always decides in June to review and approve faculty status. If there are substantive concerns backed up by reasons, the faculty should carry them to the dean and request a consideration. This calendar also allows for appeals.

b) The calendar is established and does not change. It is available in March. Better communication between chairs and faculty would be the appropriate way to deal with this question.

3. **T & P Policies Review (Committee):**

a) **Draft of timeline** – this draft is provided to provide a beginning to the review. The first step will be a survey.

D. Travel budgets: How/when is the money that has become available for the purpose of faculty travel (\$150,000?) being distributed?

1. **Response-** This will be under review based on the new budget conditions.

E. Old Business - Respect for Faculty; this issue will become a bigger problem as economic issues become more strained. The Tennessee Education Association is organizing the staff of schools and has amended the constitution to include potential access to MTSU staff. This may be a concern in the future if not addressed now.

1. **Response** – Gebert talked to various staff. Of course, this is a two-way street. The VPs are disinclined to address this issue since they are defending their

staff. Many staff are frustrated because there is no staff association to the faculty senate.

2. Other universities have online resources for students with case studies to handle university issues. Perhaps we can borrow some ideas from other universities.

II. Adjournment