

Middle Tennessee State University
Steering Committee, Faculty Senate
April 6, 2009

Action Items:

Minutes

- 1) Roll Call
 - a) Members Present - M. Balachandran, D. Belcher, J. Cain, J. Dowdy, C. Higgins, N. Kelker, A. Lutz, M. Martin, H. Means, K. Rushlow, K. Smith, S. Taylor, L. Warise
 - b) Members Excused -
 - c) Members Absent - L. Burris, B. Haskew,
- 2) Items Discussed -
 - a) Information from Lutz
 - i) Faculty staffing - report from Lutz and Smith; appears to be a tweaking of an inadequate formula rather than a redesign
 - ii) Change in Governance at state level - indicators is that THEC and UT system will merge over the next two years. This could be very detrimental depending on vision of education in the state.
 - iii) Unionization of TBR - union that is currently functioning in UT is interested and pursuing a foothold into TBR system. They declare that they have made substantive improvements at UT.
 - b) Elections for next election
 - i) Gay will put a ballot together
 - ii) Candidates for President will make a printed statement and a verbal statement at time of election.
 - c) Recommendation to D. Miller - For Academic Calendar 2010, change all summer dates to be later by about a week because of no delay between spring grades deadline and the start of the summer sessions.
 - i) Affect student leases who try to end leases at the end of the month
 - ii) Affect internships available during the summer
 - iii) July 4 break falls within a term
 - iv) Impacts fall preparation more drastically
 - v) Year-round schools - summer dates impact teacher access drastically at Master's level
 - vi) Best option - turn grades in Sunday at midnight
 - vii) Does this come under the uniform scheduling issues?
 - d) Next Liaison Meeting
 - i) Wednesday meeting is crucial and needs to be productive.
 - ii) Lutz wishes to make a personal appeal regarding the critical nature of communications and surprised at the tone of response. This refers to the President's comments: that the Faculty Senate will not be involved in any budget deliberations (on Wednesday); at the subsequent meeting, Lutz commented that eliminating a program or unit, it is both a budget and an academic matter. Should not the faculty senate have a role? President said this was not true.
 - iii) The response to the student on Wednesday was embarrassing and inappropriate.

- iv) Can we have a carefully crafted agenda of topics regarding the nature of the faculty role in the next portion of the budgetary processes without a carte blanche of topics? Can we indicate the nature of the disbelief of the faculty?
- v) Focus on our role as the faculty senate; and that we need to be involved and trusted or we have to publically deny support.
- vi) We have been asking for numbers repeatedly and have gotten inconsistent info or none at all. Instead of budget hearings, there are displayed pictures of department events. Other universities have been handled figures and it has been addressed at departmental level. What about similar structure here?
- vii) Nature of cuts, lack of trust, refusal to listen at point of budgetary decision
- viii) Difference between operational cuts (grass, utilities, administrative staff, etc.) vs. academic cuts. Case-by-case advice at the point of budgetary decision
- ix) Can we find definitions of academic vs. operational spending?
- x) Faculty does not feel that any attention to their concerns have been made in a proactive manner.
- xi) We want a chance to advise specifically at the precise moment and precise person at the time of the decisions. Since the normal budgetary processes have been changed so drastically, we need to ask for extraordinary specificity of input. We do not find it sufficient to give a global hypothetical response to non-real scenarios; we want to provide real advice in real time to specific budget cuts. That does not make us co-players in governance. But we would like to have the chance to provide the specific advice that the serious nature of the decisions demand.
- xii) Liaison agenda ideas:
 - (1) Moving forward with academic related recommendations--which ones?
 - (2) In the stimulus package, the deadlines have moved and we are acting as if they have not.
 - (3) What information is he planning to give Manning?
 - (4) What does he want the university to look like?
 - (5) Response to attrition does not manage the changes in the university – it is simply an automatic reaction.
 - (6) Quality of classes is going down because of faculty morale stinks.
- xiii) Agenda points – suggestions included below along with final ideas
 - (1) Faculty need to be involved in a different manner with the budget cuts/restructuring because this process is exceptional in both nature and extent (\$19.3M and under 2 years) and because the differences in the process are already visible. The distinction is reflected in the title of your documents soliciting philosophical ideas. We wish to discuss the role of the faculty and the faculty senate in this process for the next three years and define it now for the next few semesters? We want to be agents of supporting viable and appropriate change and we will if we are allowed to be. What is your response to our letter? As we are repositioning, it is obviously going to affect faculty and we have a responsibility to be involved. What is the role of the faculty and the faculty senate to be with the decisions regarding the academic changes?
 - (2) The faculty is on the verge of imploding very visibly. What are we going to do about it as campus leaders?
 - (3) What is the distinction between operational vs. academic? We want to be part of academic decision-making. (Included above)

- (4) In light of the governor's comments on research and governance of state higher education, what is the impact on MTSU's plans? (leave for another time)
 - (5) We're concerned about the future of this university. As we reposition the future of the university, we need to sit down and talk about the faculty senate role.
 - (6) As faculty members, we are concerned about the faculty's role in the repositioning of the university for the future.
 - (7) The situation is bad and getting worse; we need to talk about how to work through this process.
 - (8) As faculty and campus leaders, we are concerned about the way the restructuring is unfolding on campus. We would like to devote this meeting to an open discussion about how to work through this process.
 - (9) Final recommendation: As faculty and campus leaders, we are concerned about the way the process of repositioning MTSU for the future is progressing. We would like to devote this meeting to a discussion about faculty morale and related issues.
- 3) Next senate meeting agenda -
- a) Resolution to increase M.A. /Masters GTA stipends.