

Middle Tennessee State University
Steering Committee, Faculty Senate – CALLED MEETING
December 11, 2008

Action Items:

1. See the attached pages for current TBR policy:
http://www.tbr.edu/policies/default.aspx?id=1610&ekmense1=e2f22c9a_14_164_btnlink

Minutes

- 1) Roll Call
 - a. Members Present - M. Balachandran, D. Belcher, L. Burris, J. Cain, B. Haskew, C. Higgins, N. Kelker, A. Lutz, M. Martin, H. Means, K. Smith, S. Taylor
 - b. Members Excused -
 - c. Members Absent - J. Dowdy, K. Rushlow, L. Warise
- 2) Items Discussed -
 - a. Student Protest - Students will schedule “an event of protest at graduation”.
 - i. There is a designated free speech zone NE of tennis courts and 30 ft back from Murphy Center. Chancellor Manning will meet at 3:30 on Saturday in the Sports Hall of Fame.
 - ii. Manning wants to see that this is reasonable and responsible rather an irresponsible MTSU response. McPhee is upset that it has become an MTSU issue. Some of the student representatives are from other TBR schools and this will become the TBR discussion that it really is.
 - iii. Multiple student groups are represented and are describing this apolitical and at least 4 TBR schools will be represented. This is organized through Facebook.
 - b. Response to the furlough - Lutz wants to bring our campus opinion on January 8, 2009 when the Board meets.
 - i. The vote of response to the draft document will be taken 1/15/09. Other arguments and initial ideas to include will be critical. Precise language will be established on the 8th and voted about on the amendment to personnel contract on the 15th.
 - ii. Then there will be about 1.5 months to respond to the final process. The campus policy is that the TBR policy is the MTSU policy. Unfortunately, MTSU has not got a specific implementation document to govern it on-campus.
 - iii. Part of the problem is that some institutions are in difficulty while others are in extreme financial exigency. We want these institutions to be able to handle their problems
 - iv. In any furlough policy the following needs to be included:
 1. Return of funds when times are better on a first policy basis
 2. What are the binding factors in the case of a tenured person in contrast to a non-tenured person?
 3. Duration of furlough – start date and stop dates
 4. Definition of severe budget shortfalls

5. Language and definition of trigger factors – impoundment is not sufficiently proscribed
 6. (Note: are there any things we can learn from Tulane and La schools after Hurricane Katrina? AAUP censured several of these schools for bad policy decisions.)
 7. Impact on retirement needs to be addressed as well as calculating “return to normal”; also post retirement faculty issues need to be considered and addressed.
 8. UM voluntary buy-out program was reasonably effective and MTSU is looking at this; however, the position must remain unfilled for several years to benefit.
 9. Determination of impact and/or the decision-making process. There should be no sacred cows with respect to faculty, staff and programs.
 10. Should be considered a one-time issue and not on-going. They should not be renewed in order to avoid hard decisions.
 11. Needs to be defined to be specific about “a severe budget shortfall” that is universal...not just the state decided to refuse to fund Higher Education another year.
 12. A document needs to be developed that provides as much description and responsibility as the actions prescribed in the financial exigency document.
- v. Final version of the document should be sent to entire faculty. Additionally, we need to send a paragraph or so description to the entire faculty so that they know that we are taking action.
- c. Steering committee and other committees are being formed; the abrupt shortening of the calendar has caused a jump in the events. Interest has been overwhelming and there are a vast number of people who are also going to be having additional input. The steering committee made the selection, with attention to breadth of representation. A memo should be sent including general concerns and a timeline of events. The January meeting information is important. We need to address the faculty senate in advance so that this group is not assuming more authority than we have. Can we include the information about the federal bill? And information about contacting the elected officials, including Governor, legislators, etc.
 - d. The latest number for proposed budget cuts has now increased to 20% budget cut in 2009-10.
 - e. The Faculty Subcouncil is meeting 1/9/09 with Chancellor for ½ hour, in particular the furlough issue; this is a special called meeting.
 - f. If there is a need for a faculty presence at a TBR meeting, we need to know this.