

Middle Tennessee State University  
Steering Committee, Faculty Senate  
November 24, 2008

***Action Items:***

- 1.
- 2.

***Minutes***

- 1) Roll Call
  - a. Members Present - D. Belcher, L. Burris, J. Cain, J. Dowdy, B. Haskew, C. Higgins, A. Lutz, M. Martin, H. Means, N. Kelker, K. Rushlow, K. Smith, S. Taylor, L. Warise
  - b. Members Excused -
  - c. Members Absent - M. Balachandran
- 2) Items Discussed -
  - a. Budget -Begin President's/Cothorn's comments with brief update and move on to questions about budget; include a sense of timeline, when will decisions be made. Subgroups want suggestions on a rolling basis with end of the spring semester for completion. Also please make suggestions regarding appropriate responses to appropriate individuals (legislators, board of regents members, etc.) so that we can speak and we can speak with a unified voice - faculty, staff, students, and administrators.
  - b. M A stipends - Referring to the document that was previously sent forward, this is a topic that is appropriate to a redesign effort. It should be recast in light of broader importance and strengthening the Doctoral programs. On the other hand, this is a dangerous crisis and this could be distraction. The consensus was to broaden this to include all Masters' positions and the focus will be on the stipends.
  - c. Graduate Faculty Status - Graduate faculty status should be abolished and graduate faculty status (per se) be moved to the departments; or it should be stream-lined. All the significant decisions are made at the department level and this should be returned to the departmental level. After discussion, the recommendation was made for Lutz to draft a resolution and provide for the Faculty Senate on Monday.
  - d. Request from Off-Campus Student Services concerning absence policies - in regards to snow, can there be a relaxation of policy regarding absence due to inclement winter weather. The response was that we do not wish to respond to this request. As faculty, we expect students to behave maturely and professionally.
  - e. Monitoring electronic piracy in TN - This is in reference to copyright law application to MTSU responding to service providers of internets. At this point, no court cases have been pursued and the maintenance vs. risk course is unclear. This is a legal requirement so it essence it is a moot point. (Note: U S Dept of Ed is requiring that we verify who is taking tests in online courses in order to be accredited.) This could be presented to Faculty Senate for informational purposes.
  - f. Non-tenurable faculty positions - We should object with the wording of the policy; we need to object with the idea of focusing the positions so that it cannot be abused. The

requirement is that the individuals originate in the department. There should also be a specific cap on the percentage of positions in that category at the university (for example, < 15% of total positions) in order to prevent the erosion of the faculty position. The only rationale for this policy as stated is for administrative benefit, which is not sufficiently justifiable. Perhaps we could tie it to courses rather than positions? This is all tied to full-time temps--- and full-time temps erode research, planning, and growth of the department and degree. We strongly object at this time, and want to give the Provost a chance to respond to our concerns before making a formal motion via the Senate.

- g. Summer School – There will be changes for next summer. There are some very damaging proposals coming from the state level and MTSU is trying to forestall this. One suggestion is that only non-tenure track or junior faculty teach graduate courses in summer. Changes in lottery policy will improve the situation but not sufficiently.
- h. External operational review – Education dean