

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
GREEK ALUMNI COUNCIL  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
9:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m.  
Saturday, December 6, 2014  
Ingram Conference Center**

**Council members attending:** Tim Strobl, Sigma Alpha Epsilon and GAC president; Paula Mansfield, Chi Omega; Randy Crawley Jr., Omega Psi Phi; Curtis Settle, Alpha Phi Alpha; Charlie Beard, Alpha Phi Alpha; James Mason, Alpha Phi Alpha.

**University administrators attending:** President Sidney A. McPhee; Deb Sells, vice president for student affairs; Andrew Oppmann, vice president for marketing and communications; Joe Bales, vice president for university advancement; Kimberly Edgar, executive assistant to the president; Ginger Freeman, director of alumni relations; Allison Commings, director of fraternity and sorority life

**President McPhee's welcome**

You'll see some observations and reflections in the minutes of the last two sessions, one at the university and the other outside campus. I think we've set the stage for some good conversation.

Most important to me, we've identified a number of issues from which we are able to hear, candidly, your concerns, suggestions and recommendations. I hope they are adequately reflected in the notes.

I also hope you had an opportunity to share information with the much larger interest group that has developed on Facebook. I hope you are keeping them informed through the avenues you have in place. And I hope you can share with me, through Tim and Andrew, any ideas or thoughts they may have.

I want to repeat and reiterate that we need to continue these efforts, and continue to press forward in ways to improve and enhance our Greek community. But is it also important that we move beyond dialogue and into action. Our focus now needs to be on how we will move forward in the areas we have identified as top priorities.

We are all aware of many of the serious Greek infractions happening here, as well as elsewhere in higher education. But we are focused on the future, not the past. We are being proactive, perhaps even being a role model for the national landscape, by showing how a committed group of individuals can make a difference through access to the university at the very highest level, the President.

**Chairman Strobl's welcome**

I attended a conference last weekend of Greek advisors in Nashville, where I saw examples of universities with Greek systems that are thriving. I would love to be in a

position where we are capturing what is going on at other universities and bring those good ideas to MTSU. We do not need to reinvent best practices.

We established and identified our priorities at our October meeting; they reflect the things that we feel are important:

- Facility availability and cost;
- Re-establishment of fraternities and sororities not current recognized on campus;
- Recruitment and retention of members;
- Understanding of how decisions and policies that affect Greek Life are made and communicated to collegiate and alumni members

All of the members of the Greek Alumni Council are dedicated alumni who want to make a difference and bring about change that will benefit the university.

### **Discussion by the Council**

Strobl: The council would like to have someone who can work with us, and you, to make sure the action points we're discussing actually happen. Can we appoint a Greek Life Czar who will understand our problems and situations?

Bales: Is Greek experience necessary? Here or somewhere else?

Cribbs: It's more important that it be someone within the organizational structure of the university, someone whose job will not depend upon the actions and situations we will be discussing. We don't want them to be easily offended.

President: Does this need to be someone inside or outside?

Strobl: We need an individual who can work with a smaller group of Greek alumni, when necessary, to make sure we're sticking to our action items and keep all of our feet to the fire.

Cribbs: Perhaps someone who reports directly to the President?

President: Here's what I think we need:

- A troubleshooter;
- Someone who can respond to conflict and issues;
- Someone who can reach me if there are concerns with our how we operate within our normal channels;
- Someone to schedule our meetings and keep us moving forward

Cribbs: What about Andrew?

President, Strobl: Andrew will work if we:

- He is included in the GAC conference calls and discussions
- Serves as a mediator and intermediary

- Cribbs: Including on our Facebook page; we want to be as transparent as possible
- Have a process in place that he can use to make sure everyone (GAC, Greek Life staff, Sells, the President) is aware of any issue that is brought forward and that issues or questions are routed to all concerned
- This person should be a liaison, not a change agent. The change agents are around this table (GAC membership).

Sells: Greek Life staff is really focused on undergraduates, not alumni. Our staff spends the majority of its time working with undergraduates and the designated alumni and corporate representatives that are put forward by the chapters. I think Andrew will work fine in this role as a GAC liaison.

(No vote is taken, but without objection from Oppmann, the President assigns Oppmann as the staff liaison to the GAC).

### **Student Activity Fee for Greek Life?**

Strobl: There are a couple of universities who have instituted a student activity fee, charged to every member in the Greek system, which could cover administration and enhancement service. I believe it was \$50, but it could be as low as \$10 or \$20 per MTSU member. Is this worth considering to give Greek life more revenue?

McPhee: I would not be optimistic that the Tennessee Board of Regents would approve such a fee, given its concern about the rising cost of tuition and fees.

### **Better communications**

Strobl: We need help working with communications to help us reach our alumni, such as decision by SAEs to eliminate pledgeship.

Oppmann: We are happy to be a conduit for information that we know about, but shouldn't such news come from national chapters and alumni boards?

### **Availability of MTSU facilities and cost**

Strobl: This was discussed at our very first meeting. The Miss MTSU pageant had to be held off campus (Oakland High School) because we could not afford Tucker Theater on the MTSU campus. There are organizations without houses and it seems to me that the university could find space for them to have chapter rooms.

President: We really need to separate this into two issues:

- Event space
- Organization space

President: This is a difficult issue to deal with and resolve to everyone's satisfaction. The budgets for non-academic facilities, such as the Student Union Building, Tucker Theater and other event spaces, are not funded by the state; they operate from

funds generated by usage fees. There are certain but, are most difficult issue to deal with and resolve to everyone's satisfaction, because of space and cost.

Non-academic facilities (parking, student unions, etc.) are not funded by the state. They operate from the funds generated by usage fees.

Built-in costs. We can't just eliminate them.

Bales: Third-party vendors used because of the elimination of resources.

Other comments from council:

- Challenge is beyond cost
- Alpha conference had to move to TTU over MTSU
- Charged for the space if we changed to another venue for the event
- Can we develop a strategy for organizations without devoted space that they could have emergency or sudden meetings?
- Can certain buildings/departments adopt organizations?
- Should there be a difference in charging a fee for admissions for profit or philanthropy?

**Bringing back fraternities and sororities:**

- Stobel: A chart that summarizes who is out, for how long and why
- Can we accelerated the process?
- McPhee: We can share that information, but we can't accelerate a process that has already been laid out.
- Cribbs: What we are talking about is a proactive process on the path back. More clear path to bringing that back. What is required? What is needed to be done?
- Stobel: Deb is the point person, but there's not clarity of what roles other entities have in that process. Could there be a way for suspended chapters to begin recruitment before probation is finished?
- McPhee: No. There are consequences for bad behavior: Probation and suspension means you are not active on the university process
- Mansfield: DZ wanted a chance to come back and recolonize. Is there a guidebook or instruction manual?
- Allison: NPC sets process and procedure for reinstatement.
- McPhee: Appropriate that DISCUSSIONS begin before the end of probation, so that you can be ready to run as fast as possible as soon as the probation ends.