

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT LIFE, AND ATHLETICS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

The Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, in the Miller Education Center Meeting Room at Middle Tennessee State University.

Call to Order

Committee Chair Pam Wright called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

Roll Call and Statement of Necessity

Committee Chair Wright requested that Acting Board Secretary Jeff Farrar call the roll. The following Committee members were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Tom Boyd, Pete DeLay, Mary Martin, Steve Smith, Pam Wright, Delanie McDonald, Keith Huber, and Chris Massaro. Trustee Joey Jacobs participated in the meeting electronically and indicated he was able to clearly hear all others on the call, and there was no one else present in the room at his location. A quorum was declared.

Also present were Trustees Darrell Freeman and Chris Karbowiak. President Sidney A. McPhee; Mark Byrnes, University Provost; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Bruce Petryshak, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Deb Sells, Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment and Academic Services; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; Brenda Burkhart, Chief Audit Executive; Jeff Farrar, Associate University Counsel and Acting Board Secretary; and, Kim Edgar, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes - Action

The first agenda item was approval of the minutes from the November 10, 2020, Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee meeting. Board Chair Smith moved to approve the

minutes from the November 10, 2020, meeting and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the minutes from the November 10, 2020, meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee passed unanimously.

Approval of Expedited Tenure - Action

Provost Byrnes presented two candidates for expedited tenure who were recently hired by MTSU: Kenneth Currie, Chair of the Department of Engineering Technology and Kathleen Schmand, Dean of the Walker Library. They both held tenure at their previous institutions.

Trustee Boyd moved to approve expedited tenure for Kenneth Currie and Kathleen Schmand and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve expedited tenure for Kenneth Currie and Kathleen Schmand passed unanimously.

Approval of Policy Revision - Action

Provost Byrnes asked Associate Provost Mary Hoffschwelle to discuss Policy 50 Timely Reporting of a Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the SACSCOC and its accreditation implications. As an accredited institution of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), MTSU must have its own substantive change policy in order to meet the requirement of standard 14.2 of accreditation and for reporting purposes. The policy and revision ensure compliance with both SACSCOC and also the U.S. Department of Education, particularly with regard to Federal Financial Aid.

Dr. Hoffschwelle also noted that the next two new off-campus instructional sites will have to undergo extensive reviews in which SACSCOC will scrutinize the institution as a whole to determine that we have the capacity to offer a program at that site, as well as a site-specific review of physical and financial resources, the qualifications of faculty, and other support services.

Trustee Boyd moved to approve the revision to Policy 50 Timely Reporting of a Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the SACSCOC and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the revision to Policy 50 passed unanimously.

Approval of New Academic Degree Programs – Action

Bachelor of Business Administration in Supply Chain Management

Bachelor of Science in Media Management

Bachelor of Science in Photography

Provost Byrnes reported to the Committee that these programs are currently concentrations within existing majors, and the proposal is to elevate them to standalone major status. Dr. Byrnes noted the benefit to students upon graduation of providing a more specific degree as opposed to a broader degree that is less descriptive to prospective employers.

Dr. Byrnes reported that there is great industry need for students trained in supply chain management, and student interest has also increased. Media Management and Photography are long-standing programs within the Bachelor of Science in Media and Entertainment. All three programs have a track record of strong enrollment in those areas as well as degrees awarded.

Trustee Martin expressed concern for programs with lower enrollment and that splitting concentrations into stand-alone majors might cause low enrollment. THEC identifies low enrolled programs annually, and each institution must report on plans to mitigate. Dr. Byrnes reported that after separating Media Management and Photography into stand-alone programs, the Interdisciplinary Media concentration will remain, and it had 26 degrees awarded last year.

Trustee Boyd commended the Supply Chain Management program for national ranking, and Trustee Baker inquired about the program's increase in internships, job placements, and corporate financial support due to the national ranking.

A motion was made by Trustee Boyd to approve the Bachelor of Business Administration in Supply Chain Management, the Bachelor of Science in Media Management, and the Bachelor of Science in Photography. Trustee DeLay seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the Bachelor of Business Administration in Supply Chain Management, the Bachelor of Science in Media Management, and the Bachelor of Science in Photography passed unanimously.

Approval of Degree under Consideration (Action)

Master of Fine Arts in Independent Film and Television

Dr. Byrnes reported that the proposal to approve consideration of a Master of Fine Arts in Independent Film and Television would include tracks in documentary film making, creative producing, and live TV events. Dr. Byrnes reported that film and television are strengths of the University and specifically noted the TrueBlue TV station. Dr. Byrnes also noted that the College of Media and Entertainment is a premier college at MTSU with many industry contacts.

A motion was made by Trustee Baker to approve the consideration of a Master of Fine Arts in Independent Film and Television, and Trustee DeLay seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the consideration of a Master of Fine Arts in Independent Film and Television passed unanimously.

Annual Report of Academic Program Actions (Information)

Provost Byrnes referred to the materials for a list of significant academic actions approved by THEC during 2020. Some of the smaller changes were approved by THEC without coming before this Committee.

Trustee Boyd encouraged exploring healthcare related degrees MTSU could add based on existing science buildings and equipment. Provost Byrnes agreed that health care is an area of growth and will continue to explore the possibilities.

Achievement Gaps Initiative (Information)

Vice Chairman Freeman asked for a follow up to the presentation made at the last committee meeting. An updated version of the Eliminating the Achievement Gap report was sent in advance. Provost Byrnes noted that the data does indicate some achievement gaps for Black male students, which is consistent with a national phenomenon. Dr. Byrnes also discussed the programs currently in place to work toward addressing the gap, which are producing positive results. Dr. Byrnes noted that Black students have progressed in every one of the categories that the University tracks, but there is still work to do. Existing programs will continue and additional programs will be launched.

Vice Chairman Freeman noted that according to the data sent, the Fall enrollment numbers declined for Black males. Vice Chairman Freeman noted that there is work to be done and that decisions should be based on data.

Provost Byrnes introduced Vice Provost for Student Success Rick Sluder to discuss the University's use of data. Dr. Sluder discussed that MTSU enrolls 17% of Black undergraduate students in the state (third to University of Memphis (30%) and Tennessee State University (24%)). The six-year graduation rate for Black undergraduates is 44.5% at MTSU (third to UT-Knoxville (63%) and Tennessee Tech (46.3%)). MTSU's fall-to-fall retention for all undergraduate students has increased from 82.4% to 86.4%, and 79.1% to 82.8% for Black undergraduate students.

Vice Chairman Freeman asked what the graph would look like if first-generation, Black male, Pell grant recipients were graduating at the same rate as Black undergraduates who were not first-generation, Pell-Grant recipients. Vice Chairman Freeman noted that the overall graduation rate would be much higher and that focus needs to be placed on specific groups.

Dr. Sluder noted that MTSU's six-year graduate rate for all undergraduate full-time students is 51.2% (44.8% for Black undergraduate full-time students and 53.8% for White undergraduate full-time students). Dr. Sluder explained that MTSU focuses on the six-year rate because that is what THEC focuses on. Vice Chairman Freeman pointed out that four-year graduation rates were also included in the data provided and suggested that the University should focus on four-year graduation rates.

President McPhee described MTSU programs that incentivize graduating in four years. All of the reporting MTSU provides to THEC for funding is based on six years, but that does not mean we are not working on graduating students in four years or less.

Vice Chairman Freeman stated that the four-year graduation rate is four times better for White students than Black students. Committee Chair Wright noted that this is a problem nationwide to put into perspective.

Trustee Martin added that time to degree is not necessarily the instrument to measure success. She noted the need to determine where students get bogged down and put structure and resources in place to speed up progression to graduation.

Vice Provost Sluder said that colleges must be student ready, and that is why MTSU has added advisors, tutoring, and supplemental instruction. The Office of Student Success's vision is to be a national thought, practice, and results leader.

Vice Provost Sluder also noted that Pell-Eligible, Black Male undergraduate students' time to degree was lower than average, which stood out as positive data.

Vice Chairman Freeman shared a SCORE presentation highlighting Georgia State University's student success initiatives. Vice Chairman Freeman will be serving on a THEC committee for Black males across the state.

President McPhee added that MTSU has implemented much of what Georgia State has done as noted in the “Middle Tennessee State University & Georgia State University Initiative Comparison Chart” in the materials.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee