

**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, May 25, 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 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call

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, Joey Jacobs, Mary Martin, Steve Smith, Pam Wright, Delanie McDonald, Keith Huber, and Chris Massaro. A quorum was declared.

Also present were Trustees Darrell Freeman and Chris Karbowiak. President Sidney A. McPhee; Mark Byrnes, University Provost; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; 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 March 16, 2021, Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee meeting. Trustee Delay moved to approve the minutes from the March 16, 2021, meeting and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A voice vote was

taken and the motion to approve the minutes from the March 16, 2021, meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee passed unanimously.

Achievement Gaps Initiative - Information

Provost Byrnes introduced Vice Provost for Student Success Rick Sluder to provide an overview of MTSU's early arrival programs, Scholars Academy and Student Transition and Academic Readiness (S.T.A.R.) programs. Scholars Academy began in 2005 with 30 students coming to MTSU campus for a five-week academy. In 2016, it was redesigned, according to national best practices, to a two-week program and expanded to 100 students. Brelinda Johnson, Scholars Academy manager and Travis Stratton, assistant manager, presented background information on the Scholars Academy and S.T.A.R. program.

Dr. Sluder presented retention and graduation rates for Scholars Academy freshmen compared to other freshmen and the fiscal impact of MTSU's student success work. The first-time, full-time freshman retention rate has increased from 68.5% in 2013 to 78.4% in 2020. If the retention rate remained the same, we would have 803 fewer students enrolled and \$3,032,931 less in tuition.

Trustee Freeman noted that the funding formula places more emphasis on first-generation students, so we could make a business case for investing in these groups of students. Trustee Martin added that the structure of the funding formula rewards other institutions more than MTSU, because we have been so successful with first-generation, Pell-eligible students.

Dr. Sluder concluded his presentation by discussing the proportion of different races and genders among MTSU students. Data from Fall 2011 to Fall 2020 comparing students by race, ethnicity and gender shows an increase in all diverse groups.

Approval of Tenure and Promotion Candidates - Action

Provost Byrnes presented the list of twenty-two (22) tenure candidates and thirty-eight (38) promotion candidates recommended by the President and Provost for the Committee's consideration.

Chairman Smith moved to approve tenure for twenty-two (22) candidates and promotion for thirty-eight (38) candidates. Trustee Delay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Application and Enrollment Activity - Information

Provost Byrnes presented enrollment data to the Committee. Summer enrollment is up by 453 students (6.93%). Fall undergraduate enrollment is currently down by 500 students (3.6%) for this same day last year but based on CUSTOMS registrations we expect that number to be down around 2%. Graduate enrollment for Fall is up by 559 students (44.4%).

Athletics Update - Information

Athletic Director Chris Massaro reported academic and athletic achievements to the Committee. Sixty-four (64) student athletes graduated over this academic year and fifty-seven (57) student athletes earned a perfect 4.0 during Spring semester. Men's Tennis and Women's Golf had the highest semester GPAs. MTSU's athletic teams led Conference USA in league titles with only the baseball championship remaining.

Trustee Baker asked about the Athletics facility plan. Massaro responded that about half of the funding has been raised, and the goal is to have all the funding by September to present to the State Building Commission.

Setting a Goal for Graduation Rates - Action Item

Trustee Delay stated that the Board is charged with managing the university as a whole and is responsible for setting the course for the University and that graduation is the reason that students come to MTSU. Trustee delay recommended that a clear goal be established to increase graduation rates.

Trustee Delay moved to establish as the Board's top priority that we expect the six-year graduation rate to increase by 5% in the coming five years. Trustee Freeman seconded the motion.

During discussion, Dr. McPhee added that the Quest for Student Success 2025 has a goal of 60% six-year graduation rate and having the Board endorse that goal would be helpful. Trustee Delay moved to amend his motion to align with the strategic plan. Trustee Freeman seconded the motion to amend. A voice vote was taken, and the motion to amend the original motion passed unanimously.

Trustee Delay restated the amended motion: To make the MTSU Board of Trustees' number one priority, consistent with the strategic plan, to increase the graduation rate of the entire University over the coming five years. Trustee Freeman seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

Closing remarks – Committee chair Wright thanked the presenters and adjourned the meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:29 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee