Faculty Senate
Meeting Minutes
December 09, 2013, 4:30 PM
MTSU Faculty Senate Chambers

Members Present – M. Arndt, S. Boyd, J. Belsky, J. Brickey, N. Brooks, W. Canak, L. Clark, L. Craig-Unkefer, M. Deme, L. Dubek, T. Farwell, M. Fleming, M. Finch, S. Franklin, B. Freeman, J. Gray, C. Harris, J. Hawkins, B. Hinote, M. Hinz, R. Hoffman, T. Jurkanin, P. Kelly, M. Knight, A. Lutz, P. MacDougall, S. Mangrum, K. Mathis, J. McCormick, A. McCullough, W. Means, J. Miller, D. Raffo, J. Reineke, C. Rosenmuller, K. B. Rushlow, Scherzer, B. Turnage, P. Wall, M Weller, P. West-Osterfield, A. Williams

Members Absent – K. McNulty, D. Patterson, S. Roberts, C. Stephens, D. Weatherspoon,

Members Excused – L. Burriss, G. Pisut, C. True

Agenda

1. Roll call- the meeting was called to order at 4:31 by Prof. Scott Boyd.

2. A motion was made, seconded and passed to table approval of the November 11, 2013 minutes until members of the Faculty Senate could review them completely. There were corrections to the attendance.

3. Treasurers report
   - Travel: $1600
   - General: $1522.15
   - Foundation: $409.16

4. Prof. Boyd announced that the December 16th Steering Committee meeting has been moved to 10 a.m. on the same day. The move was at the request of the Steering Committee members.

5. Prof. Boyd said that Dr. Bartel was ready to reconvene the Task Force on Tenure and Promotion. He said that the service section will be discussed. He said that the goal is to have the document revised to begin using starting the 2014-2015 academic year. Prof. Boyd said he believes the task force will be composed of the same people as last year.

6. Prof. Boyd said that President McPhee has embraced the notion of examining attendance policies and is seeking input from the Faculty Senate. He said that President McPhee believes that greater attendance equates to greater student success. Studies were sent out to the Faculty Senate to review. There was

some concern regarding the dates of the articles. Prof. Boyd said that the Steering Committee recommended conducting a Survey Monkey (or equivalent) poll of the faculty to get a quick response. He said he believes that the issue of attendance will be addressed immediately and that faculty input is wanted sooner rather than later. A question was asked if the matter was about attendance being recorded by faculty and input into Pipeline? Prof. Boyd said that there is an attendance policy in the student handbook, but no uniform policy for faculty to follow. He said that how the information is reported, acquired and the process to be followed has not yet been determined. Dr. Canak said that this issue goes back to attrition rates among first-year students attending general education classes. He said that the primary concern is not with junior and senior students. It was suggested that possibly just targeting the general education classes would be the way to go. A question was asked regarding what was being done with the attendance data faculty currently record in Pipeline. A question was asked if the issue was about faculty reporting attendance or how attendance will impact final grades. Prof. Boyd said that the discussion is about faculty reporting attendance. He said those involved are going out of their way to make sure that academic integrity in the classroom remains in the hands of the faculty. A question was asked if the attendance reporting was going to be punitive. Dr. Canak said that the attendance issue is being driven by the new funding formula and may be an attempt to identify students who need someone to reach out to them to explain there will be consequences. It was pointed out that this was an advising issue. A question was asked if students who missed classes needed to be sent to a counselor, not an adviser. It was also suggested that advisers could have counselor backgrounds to assist with these student concerns. Prof. Boyd said that the sooner the Faculty Senate gathers concerns, comments, and approaches, the better prepared we will be to discuss the issue with President McPhee.

7. A question was asked regarding an update to Prof. Boyd's remarks at the last Steering Committee meeting that President McPhee has been meeting with outside companies regarding the attendance issue. A question was asked if any of these people would be invited to the Senate. Prof. Boyd said that he was not aware of any additional discussions. He said that USA Funds and the Resolve Group have met with President McPhee and additional representatives from MTSU to discuss possible partnerships to examine student success in relation to attendance. Dr. Canak said that the organizations develop models that use attendance to predict loan repayment ability of students. He said that Jeff Hoyt was developing models about where MTSU should put its resources. Dr. Canak said that the Faculty Senate should invite Jeff Hoyt to come to a meeting to review what he is working on. Prof. Boyd said that the conversations have just begun and that he thought the outside organizations were wanting to look at the MTSU data to see how it interacts with the national data the organizations use to predict loan repayments. He said that it is about student success for MTSU. A question was asked regarding the timing of the discussions. Prof. Boyd said that he was under the impression that the discussions began because President McPhee is friends with Jeff Whorley. A question was asked if the Senate should start soliciting opinions from the faculty at this point. Prof Boyd said opinions should be gathered on the attendance issue. He said that if suggestions, concerns

and other feedback could be sent to Wendi quickly, the Faculty Senate could sort through the comments and send out a survey to the entire faculty. He said that it would be ideal to have the data collected so that when the faculty returns in January, the Faculty Senate could begin analyzing it and have it ready to go in the Spring. A concern was expressed regarding the impact of the attendance policy on Junior and Senior level students. It was said that many of them are working and are mature enough to succeed without attending all the time. It was said that forcing these students to show up all the time might drive them away. Prof. Boyd said that we need to voice these concerns to President McPhee. Dr. Canak said that he thought Dr. Bartel was not as concerned with the Junior and Senior level students. A question was asked if there will be a uniform policy proposed or if authority of the classroom will remain with faculty. Prof. Boyd said that there is a discussion of an attendance policy. He said that there needs to be more research and perhaps the question is What are your feelings about an attendance policy. Dr. Canak said that money has been allocated to the hiring of advisers to reach out to students, so he believes that this would be a reporting function. A question was asked about what is going to happen with the data? Prof. Boyd said that was a valid concern and the issue of where the data goes and how it will be used is one to bring up to President McPhee. It was said that one of the top 5 concerns was that the data and absentee list doesn't return to the faculty to follow up with students who have attendance issues. It was said that that should be for the advising forces to work with. It was said that a phone call and quick email is probably not sufficient follow up for most of these students. Prof. Boyd said that he felt the administration likes the positive impact the academic progress reporting seems to have had. It was asked if representatives from industry or government were involved with the discussion on attendance because they may have a different viewpoint. Prof. Boyd said he was not aware of those parties being involved.

8. It was said that midterm report information was no longer able to be accessed in Pipeline anymore.

9. Prof. Boyd updated the Faculty Senate on the progress of the faculty expectations writing group. He said the writing group has started reviewing the documents they have collected and should have something to present to the Steering Committee in the Spring. He said they are focusing on the items they were asked to discuss (office hours, Full-Time temps, reassigned time, planned faculty absence, unplanned faculty absence). Prof. Boyd said that these items are already in MTSU and TBR policy, but not in one single document.

10. Dr. Canak updated the Faculty Senate on the progress of the Standing Committee reevaluation. He said the members of the committee are conducting meetings with committee heads and discussing committee functions. He said the information will be used to see how the committees relate to each other, if there is duplication of tasks, and how often the committees meet. Dr. Canak said the committee hoped to have a report with recommendations to the Faculty Senate in the Spring. A question was asked regarding how faculty were assigned to committees. It was asked if faculty names could be put in a database and randomly selected for committees. Prof.

Boyd said that the Chairs are responsible for committee assignments. It was asked if teaching loads could be explored. Prof. Boyd said looking at teaching loads is an option to pursue, but would prefer to have that as a separate document. It was said that the service expectations regarding committees seems to be off considering faculty are required to attend one graduation ceremony, but there is no expectation to be on standing committees. Prof. Boyd said that issue may be discussed in the Task Force on Promotion and Tenure.

11. Prof. Boyd asked Dr. Alfred Lutz to summarize the status of the partner benefits discussion. Dr. Lutz said that the TBR subcouncil meeting will be the third week of January. He said information would be available from TBR on the issue and avenues the system could pursue. He said that one thing the subcouncil could do is ask TBR to put this issue on the legislative agenda. Dr. Lutz said that he would like to be prepared to be able to express the sentiments of the Faculty Senate regarding the extension of benefits to domestic partnerships. He said that he is not looking for details or an official vote, just if the Faculty Senate would want to support the exploration of the topic. It was asked what "a committed relationship" is defined as. It was asked if we had to follow what the State policy was. Dr. Lutz said that any person can advocate for a particular position regardless what State law says. It was pointed out that this discussion should not take into account senators' personal feelings, but what their faculty constituents would like. Prof. Boyd showed some initial research on the topic sent to him by Dr. Joey Gray. He said that at this time, the goal was to get a sense of the sentiment among the faculty. A motion was made to vote on partner benefits at the State level to make them consistent with the DOD. A friendly amendment was made to take a straw poll of the faculty senators present of how they feel about extending partner benefits. The friendly amendment passed. The straw poll resulted in a majority being in favor of extending partner benefits. There was one nay vote and one abstention.

12. Prof. Boyd asked if there were additional items.
    - A question was asked if the President's Liaison committee has had an update of the impact of enrollment on faculty positions. Prof. Boyd said there was no update.
    - Dr. Hinote said that he requested data regarding DFW classes in his department. He said that some patterns emerged regarding distance learning, time slot and adjunct status. He said he would be willing to assist anyone wanting to look at the data for their department.

13. Meeting adjourned at 5:40

Action items:

1. Members of the Faculty Senate to gather comments regarding an attendance policy and forward them to Ms. Wendi Watts and Prof. Boyd for the creation of a Survey Monkey poll.
2. Ms. Watts and Prof. Boyd to create a Survey Monkey poll and distribute it to the faculty.
3. Prof. Boyd to follow up with administration regarding the availability of the midterm attendance reporting system and report back to the Faculty Senate.

4. Prof. Boyd to update the Faculty Senate if additional information arises regarding the discussion of attendance with the outside vendors.

Respectfully submitted,

Tricia M. Farwell
2013-2014 Faculty Senate Recording Secretary