

# Minutes from the October Meeting of the Faculty Senate

The regular monthly meeting of the Faculty Senate was held on Monday, October 8, 2018 at 3:30 P.M. in the Faculty Senate Chambers, 100 James Union Building.

## Attendance

**Present:** Tyler Babb, Vishwas Bedekar, Kathryn Blankenship, Alan Boehm, Nita Brooks, Larry Burriss, Nancy Caukin, James Chaney, Laura Cochrane, Rick Cottle, Trevor de Clercq, Angela DeBoer, Andrew Dix, Tricia Farwell, Rebecca Fischer, Justin Gardner, Joey Gray, Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand, Shannon Harmon, Pippa Holloway, Paul Kline, Marcus Knight, Rachel Leander, Darren Levin, Melissa Lobegeier, Alfred Lutz, Preston MacDougall, Pamela Morris, John Mullane, Susan Myers-Shirk, John Pennington, Joshua Phillips, Deana Raffo, Patrick Richey, James Robertson, Stephen Salter, Mary Ellen Sloane, Nat Smith, Donald Snead, Raj Srivastava, Sherri Stevens, Moses Tesi, Elizabeth Wright.

**Excused:** Jackie Eller, Ariana Postlethwait, Joan Raines, Mary Ellen Sloane.

**Absent:** Mamit Deme, Michael Rice.

The minutes of the September meeting were approved.

## Guest Speaker

Faculty Trustee, Tony Johnston, spoke about the lessons he learned during his tenure as faculty trustee, the future of that office, and the role of the Faculty Senate in shared governance. He recommended that the next faculty member to serve on the Board be politically astute, prepared to invest time and energy in gaining the board members' respect, and able to think strategically and judiciously when selecting issues to champion.

## Reports

- Rachel Leander reported on the Senate's budget. As of October 2, 2018, the Senate had at its disposal \$1,600 for the purpose of travel and \$3,554 for other expenses. At the start of this academic year \$1,600 and \$5,380 were budgeted for travel and other expenses, respectively.
- Laura Cochrane reported on behalf of the Academic Affairs, Student Life and Athletics Committee. She moved that the Senate adopt a motion, which is attached to this document and described in more detail in the motions section of this report.
- John Pennington, reported that the Finance Committee will be researching the University budget.
- Tricia Farwell reported that the Audit and Compliance Committee is talking with University Counsel to determine if the ethics guidelines in the faculty

handbook are an enforceable policy. If this is the case the Audit and Compliance Committee will draft suggested revisions to that policy.

- Alan Boehm reported that the Executive and Governance Committee is analyzing the efficiency and effectiveness of the University's standing committee structure. Each member of the committee has been assigned two committees to research.
- President Pippa Holloway reported.
  - She briefed the senate on the implementation of a new multifactor authentication system, and solicited questions and concerns about the implementation of this system.
  - She reminded the senate that the benefit transfer period has been reduced to just two weeks. TSEA chose not to challenge this change because historically a majority of transfers were made during the final two weeks of the transfer period. Retired employees will have additional time to transfer their benefits.

## **Motions**

1. Laura Cochrane moved, on behalf of the Academic Affairs, Student Life and Athletics Committee that the Quest for Student Success should emphasize "1) Undergraduate/faculty research and creative projects, 2) general education redesign, and 3) campus residential life and cultural experiences," and that the Faculty Senate should send this recommendation, along with a document detailing the importance of these three factors for student success, to the Provost. The motion and document were adopted after amendment. The document is included in the appendix.
2. Pippa Holloway moved, on behalf of the Steering Committee, to adopt a new timeline for the election of the Faculty Trustee. The timeline was adopted after amendment. It is included in the appendix.
3. Joey Gray moved to adopt new guidelines for the Outstanding Teaching Award. These guidelines were adopted after amendment. The guidelines are included in the appendix.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4:30 P.M.

Submitted by Rachel Leander, Faculty Senate Recording Secretary.

# Appendix

## 1. Quest for Student Success

For the MTSU Quest for Student Success initiative, the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics subcommittee reviewed the materials provided by the Provost's office and asked for feedback from faculty senators in order to determine three areas that the new Quest for Student Success program should emphasize.

Based on the discussions of the subcommittee and suggestions received from other senators, we feel that the areas that should be emphasized are 1) undergraduate/faculty research projects, 2) general education redesign, and 3) campus residential life and cultural experiences.

### **Undergraduate/faculty research and creative projects**

Undergraduate research and creative projects can play a valuable role in increasing retention and graduation on college campuses, particularly for underrepresented students. It increases both the quantity and quality of student interaction with faculty outside the classroom through the faculty-mentor relationship. Undergraduate research and creative projects support the development of student skills relevant to their discipline and identified career path, including project design, hypothesis testing, data collection and interpretation, information literacy, and communication. Students learn skills that can translate to the work environment or graduate school. Involvement in collaborative projects can help with the integration of students into college by encouraging relationships with faculty mentors and peers. Such opportunities can be scaffolded into the curriculum, including the general education curriculum, to increase engagement of students in this form of applied learning. For faculty, this can help improve the integration of research and teaching and increase faculty collaborations across departments.

### **General education redesign**

Implementing and fully supporting general education redesign as a central aspect of the Quest will have wide-ranging implications for improving the quality of the academic experience at MTSU because of the way it incorporates faculty development, curriculum development, and student engagement. Redesign can potentially contribute to a more integrated university curriculum aimed at providing students with a deeper and more compelling intellectual experience across the curriculum

### **Improving residential life and the cultural experiences**

Recent research has revealed that “campus residents experience a 3.3 percentage point increase in their probability of persisting into their second year, which provides causal support for the notion that campus residency improves retention.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the possible value associated with potentially requiring first year students to live on campus would appear to benefit student success initiatives but would certainly present logistical challenges in terms of implementing an appropriate infrastructure for residential housing. Investing additional resources towards improved residential experiences and highlighting the socio-cultural benefits associated with living on-campus could place Middle Tennessee State University in a better position to have students persist and succeed in their coursework. Furthermore, it would seem that student success as it pertains to the student life experience could also potentially be enhanced via revising the University 1010 curriculum in a manner that would further encourage students to be actively involved on campus. For example,

---

<sup>1</sup> L. T. Schudde, L. T. (2011). The causal effect of campus residency on college student retention. *The Review of Higher Education*, 34, 581-610. doi: 10.1353/rhe.2011.0023 (p. 599).

students in the aforementioned course could be encouraged to attend or join an on-campus organization in an effort to improve the cultural experience of students in a manner that could ultimately benefit student success. When taken together, the ideas of (a) devoting resources to fully maximizing the residential life component at MTSU coupled with (b) altering the University 1010 curriculum so as to expose students to the culture at MTSU would seem to benefit this new iteration of the Quest for Student Success.

## **2. Faculty trustee election timeline**

### **Faculty Trustee election timeline**

#### **December 1: Campus announcement**

Email announcement to campus detailing election procedures and timeline.

#### **First day of spring classes: Nominations due**

Individuals interested in nominating themselves or others should email Avonda Johnston at [facultySenate@mtsu.edu](mailto:facultySenate@mtsu.edu) by 5 pm. Self-nominations are encouraged. Nominees will be asked to submit workload documents for the previous 7 years in order to verify eligibility. See Section 2 below for information about eligibility.

#### **January Faculty Senate meeting: Nominations announced**

A list of all individuals willing to be considered for election will be provided at the Faculty Senate meeting. The January meeting is typically held at 3:30 PM in the Faculty Senate Chambers on the last Monday of January.

#### **February 1: Written statements due**

Candidates submit one-page written statement and c.v. to Faculty Senate by 5 pm. Suggested topics for the statement include: (1) Experience in shared-governance work; (2) Role of faculty trustee (3) Faculty trustee's relationship to the Senate.

#### **February Faculty Senate meeting: Meet with Faculty Senate**

Candidates attend Faculty Senate meeting to meet individually with the Senate. The meeting is typically held at 3:30 PM in the Faculty Senate Chambers on the second Monday of the month.

#### **March Faculty Senate meeting: Election**

Held during Faculty Senate meeting, 3:30 pm in the Faculty Senate chambers. The meeting is typically held at 3:30 PM in the Faculty Senate Chambers on the second Monday of the month.

Elections occur every 2 years in odd-numbered years.

## **Faculty Senate Bylaws**

### **ARTICLE XIII: FACULTY APPOINTMENT TO MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE BOARD**

The FOCUS ACT of 2015 allows an appointment to the State Board for Middle Tennessee State University to be selected from the faculty. This policy provides the details for that selection and is set forward in the Bylaws of the Faculty Senate.

Section 1. Description of Responsibilities: As provided for in the FOCUS ACT of 2015, there will be a local board faculty representative selected from the faculty of Middle Tennessee State University. The term of the faculty representative to the board will be two years, as established by state law. No faculty member on the local board may serve for more than one two-year term without a two-year break, with the exception as noted in Section 4. The selection of the faculty representative will be under the purview of the Faculty Senate of Middle Tennessee State University. The faculty representative will attend board meetings and fulfill fiduciary responsibility as required by membership on the Board. Additionally, the local board faculty representative shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Faculty Senate, Faculty Senate Steering Committee, President's Liaison Committee, and Academic Affairs Committee.

Section 2. Eligibility: To be eligible to serve as the faculty representative on the local board, the faculty member must be a tenured, full-time faculty member who has worked at least 7 consecutive years at MTSU, and who has performed less than 50% of their work in the area of administration during these 7 years as determined by their workload. Faculty members who perform 50% or greater of their work in the area of administration, including members of the Chairs Council, shall not be eligible to serve as faculty representative on the local board. If eligibility of a person to be nominated is questioned, the Faculty Senate shall be the judge of the qualifications of that person. The decision of the Faculty Senate can be appealed in writing to the Faculty Senate President within two weeks of notice of ineligibility. In the case of an appeal, the Faculty Senate will appoint a committee with one representative per college, including University College and Walker Library to review the decision.

Section 3. Selection Process: In a year when a new board member is to be selected, the Faculty Senate President will request from the faculty nominations of faculty members to be considered for election to the local board. The Faculty Senate Steering Committee will review nominations for eligibility and present a ballot to the Faculty Senate for a vote. The local board faculty representative will be elected at the next Faculty Senate meeting by a majority vote of the Faculty Senate. A majority of the total Faculty Senate membership shall constitute a quorum for voting. The election will take place at the appropriate Faculty Senate meeting in order to allow the faculty senate representative to participate in the training and assumption of duties at the same time as other new Board members for that year. If the Faculty Senate Steering Committee judges that an insufficient number of nominations has been received, then the Faculty Senate Steering Committee may add a nomination to the ballot. In this case, the assent of the additional nominee

must be obtained by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee before presenting the ballot to the Faculty Senate.

Section 4. Replacement of Faculty Board Member: If a faculty board member is unable to complete the term of his/her appointment, a replacement for the faculty board member will be secured in accordance with Sections 2 and 3 of this article. The new selection process will begin immediately upon notification of the Faculty Senate Steering Committee of the need. Once elected, the replacement will serve the remainder of the term of the board member being replaced; completing a partial term of a previous faculty representative does not prevent the replacing board member from being elected to an immediate subsequent full term.

### **3. Outstanding Teaching Award Guidelines**

#### **MTSU Outstanding Teaching Award Guidelines**

Nominees for the Outstanding Teaching Award must maintain a consistent record of outstanding teaching performance and implement effective and/or innovative teaching methods which demonstrate exceptional abilities to motivate student learning.

Nominees must show a concern for students inside and out of the classroom (e.g. career preparation, mentorship, etc.), and participate in the administrative aspects of teaching (curriculum planning, supervision of programs, development of community programs, research etc. as related to teaching).

#### **Guidelines for Nomination**

1. Faculty must receive nominations from at least two of the three groups: alumni, faculty, and students. More than one nomination must come from at least one group.
2. A faculty member, students and/or alumni may nominate only one person.
3. Only full-time faculty are eligible for nomination.
4. Faculty nominated must have worked at MTSU for at least four years.
5. Previous award winners may be nominated again five years after the receipt of their last award.

#### **Required Application Materials for E-portfolio**

The following must be provided via an e-portfolio. No hard copy portfolios will be accepted.

1. **Home page with the following information**
  - Nominee's name and title (ex: John Doe, Ph.D., Associate Professor)
  - Department
  - Contact information, including mailing address, phone number, and email address
2. **Main Contents of E-Portfolio**

- A statement of teaching philosophy
- A 3-5 page statement highlighting the nominee's excellence in teaching in relation to the award criteria
- Up to 5 documents speaking to the nominee's outstanding teaching (e.g., syllabi, activities, assessments, peer reviews, and teaching evaluations)
- Syllabi for 3 courses taught in the last three years and the following course materials from each course:
  - An example of assessments used to ascertain student attainment of learning outcomes from each course.
  - An example of student engagement in learning from each course (such as active learning strategies, field experiences, service learning, learning communities, and/or student research).
  - A description and any relevant documents that illustrate the nominee's approach to continuous quality improvement of innovative course materials.
- Student evaluations all courses taught over the last four years. When applicable, results should be displayed in comparison to appropriate reference group (e.g., by college, department, or modality).
- Curriculum Vitae

### **3. Additional Suggested Supporting Materials (if applicable)**

- Evidence of interaction, related to academics, with students beyond the classroom (if not adequately illustrated in other materials)
- Evidence of commitment to high quality education from participation in teacher training and/or academic teaching conferences.
- Pedagogical scholarship
- Others as appropriate

### **4. Letters of Support**

- Nominees may provide a list of up to five students who can write letters of support. This list will be given to the chair or nominating faculty member, who will solicit these letters. These letters should be sent directly to the review committee to protect confidentiality.
- Two letters of support from peer faculty who are familiar with the nominee's curriculum and teaching style.

### **Final Selection**

The Outstanding Teaching Award Committee, which will consist of 7 members (including the committee chair) representing the faculty, foundation, alumni, SGA, and administration, will review the nominees to determine if each meets the above criteria.

Award nominees must clearly demonstrate their commitment to teaching and a sustained capability to deliver excellence to the student learning experience. The

review of portfolios is expected to evaluate teaching excellence using the following criteria:

- Sustained high performance in student exit (end-of-course) evaluations for more than one course, at any level; evidence to include high evaluation scores.
- Syllabi clearly articulate the expected student learning outcomes and major assignments clearly and compellingly align with those outcomes.
- Compelling recommendations from students, peer faculty and department chair that speak highly of nominees' curriculum quality and classroom expertise.
- Provides clear and compelling evidence of innovative course development, materials and content that together inspire students' curiosity and creativity.
- Provides clear and compelling commitment to and evidence of continuous improvement and innovation in the preparation of course materials.
- Demonstrates a clear and compelling focus on student engagement in the learning process through innovative and inclusive teaching techniques.
- Employs a variety of teaching tools and mediums into courses.
- Clear and compelling academic-related interaction with students beyond the classroom, such as sponsorship of student organizations, sponsorship of scholastic fraternities, field experiences, and student research.
- Additional extraordinary commitment to teaching including mentoring students, service learning, engagement, advising, and thesis advising.