

**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, November 9, 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 1:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Committee Chair Wright requested that Board Secretary James Floyd call the roll. The following Committee members were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Pete DeLay, Joey Jacobs, Steve Smith, Pam Wright, Chris Karbowski, Rick Cottle, Gabriela Jaimes, Keith Huber, and Chris Massaro. A quorum was declared. Subsequent to the action items, Trustees Tom Boyd and Darrell Freeman participated in the meeting electronically and indicated they were able to clearly hear all others on the call, and there was no one else present at their locations.

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 Burkhardt, Chief Audit Executive; James Floyd, University Counsel and 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 August 24, 2021, Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee meeting. Trustee Baker moved to approve the minutes

from the August 24, 2021, meeting, and Trustee Karbowski seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the minutes from the August 24, 2021, meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee passed unanimously.

Approval of New Academic Degree Program - Action

Master of Science in Data Science

Provost Byrnes referred to the proposal and stated that adding this master's degree gives us data science offerings from the bachelor's through the doctorate levels, and that the career path is clear and lucrative. Employers were consulted during construction of the proposed program and will continue to confer with them to stay abreast of industry needs.

Trustee Delay moved to approve the Master of Science in Data Science and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the Master of Science in Data Science passed unanimously.

Approval of Expedited Tenure - Action

Provost Byrnes thanked Interim Vice Provost Nita Brooks and presented for tenure the recently appointed Vice Provost for Academic Programs, Amy Aldridge Sanford, who will begin employment on February 1, 2022. Dr. Aldridge Sanford was recommended for tenure by her respective chair, dean, department and college committees, the Provost, and President.

Trustee Karbowski moved to approve expedited tenure for the candidate. Trustee Delay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve expedited tenure passed unanimously.

Approval of Policy Revision - Action

Provost Byrnes presented revisions to Policy 301 Admissions necessitated by statute. Applicants for first time admission who have received an associate degree from a regionally accredited institution are not required to submit a high school transcript or GED certificate.

Chairman Smith moved to approve revisions to Policy 301 Admissions. Trustee Delay seconded the motion.

Karbowiak asked about waiving the ACT requirement permanently. Provost Byrnes said we are moving towards not requiring ACT for admission, but it will be required for scholarships and course placement.

A voice vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

Performance Metrics - Information

Provost Byrnes presented the annually updated Metrics Chart and noted the upward trend in our graduation rate. Trustee Boyd commended the downward trend in average debt of undergraduates.

Enrollment Update - Information

Vice President Deb Sells discussed recruitment and enrollment of new freshman and transfer students. She began with a list of the top counties and high schools where new freshmen came from and then summarized the demographics of MTSU students as compared to UTK. She demonstrated the MTSU enrollment funnel beginning with applications received, completed applications, admissions, and ending with number enrolled.

Next, Vice President Sells outlined recruitment activities, communication efforts, and strategic recruitment initiatives. The good news is the number of freshmen admitted is higher than 2020 at this point. Transfer student admissions are level due to lower enrollment at community colleges over the last couple of years.

Trustee Freeman asked about the enrollment decline of Fall 2021 and what percentage of total Fall 2021 enrollment were African American. Dr. Sells replied that we were down 5.45%, and we have 3,783 African American students this fall, which is 18.14% of total enrollment.

Trustee Freeman then asked about the demographics of purged students. Dr. Sells noted we have been looking at purged students for 10 years and have cut the number in half. She then asked Dr. Sluder to discuss his findings. Dr. Sluder reported 1,300 students were purged, and 650 re-enrolled by census time. Demographics show 40% male, 53% first-generation, 2.90 average GPA, and the average hours completed were 112 hours. We are looking at how can we use our funds to make the biggest impact. Trustee Freeman wants to work on a fund to help students in this situation. Dr. Sells added that since 2012, we have raised more than \$500,000, including Trustees' donations, for a variety of funds to help students.

Trustee Jaimes asked what the process is for students who need these funds? Dr. Sells distributed a list of emergency services. Students can apply directly through the MT One Stop. Microgrants are administered through the colleges, and the Trustees' Last Dollar Scholarship is administered through financial aid to put funds directly into the students' accounts.

Trustee Freeman requested ten years' worth of purge data but agreed to go back to the beginning of the creation of the Board of Trustees in 2017.

President McPhee added that we wish we didn't have to purge any students, but it is a THEC policy to purge students for non-payment at certain times prior to the semester's beginning. Students who owe less than \$200 are not purged, but we must get that list approved by THEC.

Trustee Baker commended Vice President Sells' presentation and all of the recruitment activities. He also asked for a report on fraternities and sororities at the next meeting.

Trustee Jaimes asked about the bus initiative in the materials presented. Vice President Sells described the process of talking with counselors during True Blue Tours and offering to send a bus for their students to bring them to campus for a tour and lunch.

Trustee Jaimes also asked how waiving the ACT for admissions is affecting our acquiring student information from ACT. Vice President Sells added that the ACT is still given for free in Tennessee high schools, but we are watching that closely.

Trustee Boyd asked about increasing Hispanic enrollment. Vice President Sells stated that we attend Hispanic community events for recruiting. If students are not citizens, we can't give them in-state tuition, so this is a big factor.

Trustee Jaimes asked about support programs for students whose first language is not English. Vice President Sells responded that they would be involved in our existing support programs available to all students. Trustee Cottle added that this is an issue with graduate students as well, and the Office of International Affairs is interested in bringing English language services on campus.

Athletics Update - Information Item

Athletics Director Massaro presented some highlights from the fall. He reported that both men's and women's cross-country teams won C-USA titles in October. Also, we hosted a celebration of life for Steve Peterson on homecoming weekend. In early November, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held to recognize the opening of our new golf facility at the Grove Country Club. Next, on Monday, November 15th, we will have a kickoff program for our athletics facilities campaign. Lastly, conference affiliation discussions should be resolved very soon.

Adjournment

Committee Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee