

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

The Middle Tennessee State University Board of Trustees met on September 15, 2020, in the Miller Education Center Meeting Room at Middle Tennessee State University.

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair Steve Smith called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Keith Huber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of Student Veteran

Gen. Huber introduced William Lickman, Master Sergeant USAF, retired, who served over 23 years beginning as a security policeman in the Air Force and then joining the Air Force Special Operations to become an elite protective agent focused on protection of the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, senior four star generals and admirals. He was at the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, when it was attacked. He assisted in the evacuation of the Pentagon while providing support and protection for the Secretary of Defense. Based on injuries sustained that day, Mr. Lickman was awarded the Purple Heart. He then became a criminal investigator. While serving a year in Iraq, he provided analysis of improvised explosive devices to determine the source of the bombs. He is currently an MTSU undergraduate majoring in video and film production with a minor in photography. He is also working on his commercial drone pilot license. Mr. Lickman expressed his thanks and credited the Daniel Center staff for assisting him and his family with a smooth transition to MTSU. Chairman Smith presented Mr. Lickman a token of appreciation.

Gen. Huber then shared a video from Retired General Jim Mattis in which he commended the Daniels Center as a model for the nation where veterans are assisted in the transition to civilian life.

Request to Address the Board - Action

The Board received a request from Ms. Kylie Moe, a student at MTSU, to address the Board. Though the request was timely submitted, the meeting agenda had already been finalized. Board Bylaws state: "Matters not appearing on the agenda of a slated meeting may be considered only upon an affirmative vote of a majority of those present and voting." Chairman Smith made a motion to allow Ms. Moe the opportunity to address the Board. Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.

Roll Call

Board Secretary Heidi Zimmerman requested to call the roll. The following trustees were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Thomas Boyd, Darrell Freeman, Joey Jacobs, Mary Martin, Stephen Smith, Pam Wright, and Delanie McDonald. Chris Karbowski participated electronically. Based on T.C.A. § 8-44-108(c)(3), Ms. Zimmerman asked whether she could hear clearly in order to participate; and, whether there was anyone present in the room with her. Trustee Karbowski indicated that she could hear clearly and that there was no one in the room with her. Trustee Pete DeLay was absent. A quorum was declared. President Sidney A. McPhee; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; Mark Byrnes, University Provost; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; 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; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Brenda Burkhart, Chief Audit Executive; Heidi Zimmerman, University Counsel and Board Secretary; and, Kim Edgar, Executive Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, were also in attendance.

Ms. Kylie Moe – Address to the Board

Chairman Smith welcomed Ms. Moe, a senior at MTSU, to the podium. Her remarks concerned her desire that the name of Forrest Hall be changed. She indicated that all students on campus deserve to feel welcome, but this name does not reflect that value. She stated that "tackling

racial and historical issues such as this can be incredibly uncomfortable, but the discomfort of a moment is worth the change of a lifetime.” Ms. Moe indicated that she will not stay in Murfreesboro if the city cannot implement changes that align with transitioning viewpoints and stated that many students feel the same. Ms. Moe recognized that changing the name of a building is an opportunity for MTSU to bring students together to make a statement that it will fight for the unification and opportunities of all individuals. She stated that although changing the name of a building is a small gesture, it will send “an incredibly motivating and supportive message to the community.”

Chairman Smith thanked Ms. Moe for taking the time to speak to the Board. He stated that the Board and appropriate institutional staff would take her concerns and suggestions under consideration and determine if any next steps should be taken. Trustee Freeman also thanked Ms. Moe for her message and for having the courage to address the Board. He stated that when he was a student at MTSU over thirty years ago, he and other students worked to successfully have the plaque of Nathan Bedford Forrest removed from the side of the Keathley University Center. Trustee Freeman stated that he does not think anyone on the Board would want students to believe they are not welcome on the campus. He told Ms. Moe he appreciated what she has done and that she is one of many who have similar feelings about Nathan Bedford Forrest.

Rulemaking Hearing – Rule 0240-07-06 Title IX Compliance

At 1:25 p.m., Chairman Smith called to order the Rulemaking Hearing related to MTSU Rule 0240-07-06 Title IX Compliance. He stated the hearing was being conducted in the manner set by the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, T.C.A. § 4-5-204, and that the video recording would be used as the record for this hearing. The purpose of the hearing was to afford all interested persons an opportunity to present facts, views, or arguments relative to the rule to the Board. Notice of the hearing on the prescribed form was submitted for publication to the Tennessee Secretary of State’s Office. Notice was emailed to all MTSU students, faculty, and staff. Information about the hearing was posted on the Board of Trustees webpage. Notice was also provided to various media outlets. Chairman Smith indicated that anyone interested in making

comments during the hearing would need to sign in on the sheet outside the meeting room. Copies of the rule were available next to the sign-in sheet. He asked Dr. Marian Wilson, Assistant to the President, Institutional Equity and Compliance, and Jeff Farrar, Associate University Counsel, to provide a rule summary.

Dr. Wilson stated that Title IX, effective since 1972, requires educational institutions to have policies in place to ensure that no member of the academic community is denied any education benefit or is subjected to discrimination or harassment based on their sex or gender. MTSU has had a sexual misconduct policy and procedures in place for a very long time. That policy outlined prohibited behavior and procedures to address those behaviors. MTSU was able to decide how the policy was implemented based on what worked best within the law for the University. On May 16, 2020, the U.S. Dept. of Education released new regulations scheduled for implementation on August 14, 2020. The new regulations are specific and do not allow latitude concerning what will be covered or how the regulations must be implemented. The proposed policy [and rule] includes new federal definitions of the violations as well as prescriptive procedures for how the University must address the violations. As before, the institution will identify a Title IX Coordinator, the Title IX team, and mandatory reporters for the University, and identify where formal complaints will be filed. Supportive measures, previously referred to as interim measures, will be provided. Given the nature of these changes required under the new regulation, a dedicated Title IX policy [and rule] is proposed.

Chairman Smith asked Ms. Zimmerman if any written comments on the rule had been received. Ms. Zimmerman replied that no written comments had been received.

Chairman Smith stated that at that time, MTSU will afford all interested parties the opportunity to present facts, views, or arguments related to MTSU's rule for Title IX Compliance. As there were no speakers, Chairman Smith asked if there were any questions or comments from the Board.

There were none. Chairman Smith asked for a motion to approve Rule 0240-07-06 Title IX Compliance as presented after due consideration of comments received. A motion was made by Trustee Karbowiak and seconded by Trustee Baker. A roll call vote was taken with eight (8) trustees voting Aye to approve the Rule 0240-07-06 Title IX Compliance; there were no Nay votes. The motion to approve Rule 0240-07-06 Title IX Compliance as presented carried and the hearing concluded.

Policy 29 Title IX Compliance – Action

Mr. Jeff Farrar, Associate University Counsel, explained that Policy 29 Title IX Compliance was drafted to comply with the revisions to the Title IX regulations from the U.S. Department of Education, 34 C.F.R. Part 106 that formed the basis for the rule just approved. The policy comports with all requirements contained in the federal regulation and is consistent with Rule 0240-07-06 Title IX Compliance. A motion was made by Trustee Freeman and seconded by Trustee Wright to approve Policy 29 Title IX Compliance. A roll call vote was taken. With eight (8) Aye votes and no Nays, the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes – Action

The next agenda item was approval of the minutes from the June 16, 2020, Board meeting. Trustee Martin made the motion to approve the minutes from the June 16, 2020 meeting, and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the minutes from the June 16, 2020 meeting of the Board passed, 8 - 0.

Diversity Efforts

The Board was provided information about diversity efforts on campus. Dr. Marian Wilson, Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and Compliance (IEC), and Title IX and Title VI Coordinator, explained that her office is responsible for some of the efforts that support diversity and inclusion of faculty and staff at the University. In 2017, Dr. McPhee requested that a climate survey of students be taken concerning their experiences at MTSU. Eleven percent of 20,000 students responded. The data suggested that these students perceived MTSU's campus

community to be mostly comfortable, respectful, and welcoming. When asked about their interactions with bias, 59% reported they had not personally experienced bias and 49% reported they had not witnessed bias from other students. These students reported witnessing bias from faculty and staff at a rate of 6% based on race and gender. When the data was stratified by personal characteristics, the results suggested that 20% of these students most commonly witnessed bias from other students based on race, followed by religion at 19% and sexual orientation at 18%. Only 50% of these students, though, reported they would feel comfortable speaking up about a lack of diversity in an academic setting. Fifty-one percent reported that they would feel comfortable speaking up about a lack of diversity at social settings. Conclusions from these data were overall that our students felt that MTSU appreciated diversity but they would likely only speak up about the lack of diversity and inclusion on issues that directly affected them. As a result of this survey, Mr. Daniel Green, Director of Intercultural and Diversity Affairs, began a number of critical conversations that he continues today with students on multiple issues of diversity and their experiences.

Diversity and inclusion efforts are also supported through the Access and Diversity fund. These funds support the scholarly work of women and faculty of color, and the professional development for staff. For the last five years, support has been provided for between 19-32 faculty, 10-12 staff, and 2-4 dissertation fellow stipends annually. These funds are also used to support departments and campus-wide institutional inclusion events such as Black History Month, Women's History Month, the LGBT campus conference, the Women and Gender Studies biannual conference, the Unity Luncheon, a women's warrior program last year that recognized the contribution of women veterans, and two years ago, the Movement 68, the celebration of the 50th anniversary of black student activism at MTSU.

IEC also serves as a resource supporting departments, colleges, and individual faculty and staff related to diversity through the University's affirmative action plan, focusing on representation for race, gender, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. This data is shared broadly so that the University can use it in hiring and searches. Gains have been significant in hiring women in

all academic ranks, and there is no longer any underutilization. Gaps exist in representation for faculty of color in the ranks of professor and associate professor, and there is a small shortfall for faculty who identify as Asian at the level of assistant professor. The largest gap, though, is for faculty of color in the instructor and lecturer level.

The affirmative action plan also includes a veterans plan. MTSU has adopted the current National Hiring Benchmark for Veterans in the civilian workforce of 5.7%. MTSU's current veteran workforce is 2.5% of the workforce; 1.6% of new hires for last year were veterans.

MTSU has adopted the National Utilization Goal of 7% in each job group for individuals with disabilities. More faculty and staff with qualifying conditions have registered in IEC because of COVID-19.

Finally, IEC provides support in employee recruitment by reviewing all applicant pools to ensure women, individuals of color, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are not excluded in any employee search process.

Dr. Deb Sells shared information from the fall census numbers. About one-third of MTSU students identify as not Caucasian. Of those, 20% are African-American, about 7% Hispanic, and about 6% identify as Asian. More than half - 55% - are women. There are about 800 students with disabilities, and a bit more than 1,000 students who identify as military-affiliated. Dr. Sells stated that as the student body has become more diverse, the average entering high school GPA and ACT scores of these students remain increasingly well qualified.

Dr. Sells explained that with a very diverse student body, the University wants to make sure services are provided to help support these students, both academically and in terms of their transition to the campus community. Programming is provided for specific populations including non-traditional students (23 years of age and older) through the June Anderson Center, students with disabilities through the Disability and Access Center, and student veterans and military

connected students through the Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center. The Greek life area supports seven of the nine African-American fraternities and sororities. There is also the Intercultural and Diversity Affairs Center (IDAC) that serves diverse student populations, providing a physical gathering place and an interfaith gathering room where students can go to pray. It serves students of underrepresented religious beliefs, cultural heritage, and lesbian/gay, bisexual and transgender students. The staff serve as advisor to many student organizations. A multicultural advisory board meets with Dr. McPhee a couple of times a year and provides their perspective on their inclusion on campus and campus climate for students of diverse backgrounds. The IDAC also coordinates the awarding of four privately endowed scholarships and there is a special recognition ceremony at each commencement period to recognize the graduation of multicultural students. IDAC also works with campus-wide programming to bring awareness to all students about the rich diversity of the campus and various contributions due to cultural diversity.

Dr. Cheryl Torsney, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, presented on two diversity and equity inclusion signature programs initiated by Dr. McPhee. The Diversity Dissertation Fellows program was begun 18 years ago with the goal of funding diverse pre-doctoral scholars as they complete their dissertations. Scholars teach one course per semester, receive mentoring, and participate in the community. "Diverse" is defined to include women in male-dominated fields like aerospace. There have been fifty-three (53) fellows in this program and seven (7) of these faculty are still on the MTSU campus.

Scholars Academy is the second of the signature programs under Dr. McPhee's leadership, led by Dr. Vincent Windrow, Travis Strattion, and Brelinda Johnson in the Office of Student Success. Scholars Academy is a two-week summer program that began in 2005 with 20 students to provide underrepresented, underprepared, and Pell eligible students a jump start on their college career. It is laser-focused on the success of these students. This program has grown exponentially. This year it served ninety-two (92) students and since its inception, the program has served about 1,800 students. It begins with a two-week early arrival program. The scholars must enroll in the

Scholars Academy's section of University 1010 that includes study skills workshops, team building exercises, leadership training, a summer reading program, and service learning programs. Scholars Academy has an academic benefit of preparing students to be successful in general education courses along with significant advising support. A core of fifty-five (55) peer mentors attends class with these scholars to answer questions, establish community, and maintain focus. It has the social benefit of highlighting the challenges of independence as well as teaching students about their personal strengths. Students engage in real person-to-person conversations about college, attend events, and participate in the Scholars Academy Student Organization. The long-term benefits include, most importantly, increased persistence, retention and graduation rates of participants, and early identification of career options and opportunities. For the 2019 Scholars Academy cohort, the persistence rate from semester to semester was 92% - higher than the overall student body at 89.5%. The retention rate - first-time, full-time fall-entering and returning the following fall - for the Scholars Academy cohort was 80%. The retention rate for the overall student body was around 80.4%. The four-year graduation rate for the 2016 Scholars cohort was 27.5% as compared to the overall student body four-year graduation rate of 22.6%. The six-year graduation rate for the 2014 Scholars cohort was 48.2%, which is higher than that of the overall student body at 47%.

Dr. McPhee introduced Dr. Louis Woods, Associate Professor of History and Presidential Fellow for Social Justice and Equality, who spoke about the Social Justice and Equality Initiative. Under President McPhee's leadership, the Social Justice and Equality Initiative was designed to address systemic racism at MTSU. Dr. Woods stated that, according to Joe Feagin, a leading expert in this field, "systemic racism" is an oppressive, inequitable system existing for centuries, generating wealth and improved life chances based upon race. Systemic racism is far more than individual prejudice. Since the 1600's, whether manifested in enslavement, segregation, or mass incarceration, racial bigotry has become embedded in most major American institutions. The Social Justice and Equality Initiative is in the process of creating a task force that will vet ideas and present them to President McPhee and Provost Byrnes dealing with four areas: curriculum,

campus climate, workforce inclusion, and community outreach. The goal is to identify short-term and longer-term goals under each one of those four umbrella items.

Trustee Freeman asked about the University's diversity policies. Dr. Wilson explained there are a number of policies the University is required to follow with regard to diversity, equal opportunity, and affirmative action. When Trustee Freeman asked for specific numbers, both Dr. McPhee and Dr. Wilson explained that these plans require these statistics be reported to the state and, therefore, are accessible. Additionally, statistics regarding race and gender were provided to the Board in their information packets. Trustee Freeman asked for the graduation rate of African-Americans versus whites. Dr. Wilson said she will be sending those numbers to the state next week and could share them then.

Trustee Freeman stated that a number of universities have a chief diversity officer who is responsible for diversity across the entire campus, and asked if MTSU has given that some consideration. Dr. McPhee replied that there is not a comparable position but that part of Dr. Torsney's responsibility and title is the chief diversity officer in academic affairs. He further stated that, with Dr. Woods, he held a Zoom campus-wide meeting for faculty and staff, and one of the suggestions was to look at reinstating that diversity position.

Dr. McPhee assured the Board that University administration, faculty, and staff are focused on the success of all students, including first-generation college students and the diverse student population. In response to requests from Trustee Boyd, Dr. McPhee stated that the trustees would receive a copy of the survey referenced by Dr. Wilson, as well as, information concerning grievances received by IEC alleging racial discrimination.

Trustee Freeman then raised a concern relating to salary disparity on campus between women and men. Dr. Wilson stated that when she does the affirmative action plan, every position is evaluated through a comprehensive compensation analysis. She stated that there is no wage discrepancy among like jobs.

Committee Report: Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics

Committee Chair Pam Wright gave the report from the August 18, 2020, meeting of the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee. The meeting began with approval of the minutes from the June 2, 2020 meeting. The Committee report contained three (3) action items presented by Provost Mark Byrnes, approved by the Committee, to be considered and voted on by the Board. There were also three (3) information items. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

New Academic Degree Programs: B.A., Art Therapy and M.A., Art Therapy – Action

University Policy 251 Approval of Academic Programs, Units, and Modifications states all academic actions that require review and approval by THEC must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Proposals for a Bachelor of Arts in Art Therapy and a Master of Arts in Art Therapy were approved by the Committee for recommendation to the Board.

New Academic Degree Under Consideration: M.S., Data Science – Action

Per THEC Policy A1.0 (New Academic Programs: Approval Process), “upon consideration by an institution to develop a new academic program in excess of 24 semester credit hours and notification to the institutional governing board, the institution may submit a Letter of Notification to THEC.” The Committee also approved this item.

Chicago Statement – Action

Chairman Smith welcomed Dean Emeritus and Director of the Free Speech Center, Mr. Ken Paulson, to make a presentation on the Chicago Statement. The Committee acknowledged the efforts of the administration and reaffirmed Policy 103 Free Speech on Campus, and enthusiastically endorsed its principles and requested the Board do likewise.

Fifth-Year Interim Report - Information

Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle, MTSU's SACSCOC Accreditation Liaison, Associate Provost for Strategic Planning and Partnerships, updated the Committee regarding planning and preparation of the Fifth-Year Interim Report due March 2022.

Data Science Initiative – Information

Dr. Charlie Apigian, Professor of Information Systems and Analytics and Co-Director of the Data Science Institute provided a report on MTSU's Data Science Initiative.

Athletics Update - Information

Chris Massaro, Director of Athletics, gave an update on return to play and the 2019-2020 grade report.

Motion

Trustee Wright made the motion to approve the action items recommended by the Committee and Trustee Freeman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the action items passed unanimously.

Committee Report: Audit and Compliance Committee

Committee Member Mary Martin reported that the Audit and Compliance Committee met on August 18, 2020. The Committee approved the minutes from its June 2, 2020 meeting. The Committee report contained two (2) action items, approved by the Committee, to be considered and voted on by the Board. [Rule 0240-07-06 Title IX Compliance and Policy 29 Title IX Compliance were earlier approved by the Board.] Several information items were also presented. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

Title IX Compliance: Rule 0240-07-06 and Policy 29

Information was presented about new Rule 0240-07-06 Title IX Compliance and Policy 29 Title IX Compliance by Dr. Marian Wilson, Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and

Compliance, and Jeff Farrar, Associate University Counsel. These were drafted to comply with revisions to the federal Title IX regulations from the U.S. Department of Education, 34 C.F.R. Part 106. The Rule and Policy were prepared and reviewed by a working group consisting of representatives from Student Affairs, Institutional Equity and Compliance, Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management, the Provost's Office, and the Office of the University Counsel. The Rulemaking Hearing was conducted just after roll call for today's meeting, followed by approval of Policy 29.

Annual Report for Audit and Consulting Services – Action

T.C.A. § 49-14-102, along with the MTSU Board of Trustees Bylaws and Policy on Board Committees, requires an annual comprehensive report on the internal audit function be submitted for the Committee's review. The report was submitted for the Committee's review.

MTSU Policy 70 Internal Audit, Section VII.C., requires approval of the audit plan by the Audit and Compliance Committee. The Internal Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2021 was included in the annual report and presented to the Committee for approval.

Risk Assessment Reporting – Action

T.C.A. § 9-18-104 of the Financial Integrity Act requires institutions of higher education prepare and provide a management assessment of risk to the State of Tennessee's Commissioner of Finance and Administration and to the Comptroller of the Treasury by December 31 annually. For 2020, the President's Division and the Information Technology Division performed and provided risk assessment reporting. In addition, a risk assessment report was completed detailing university-wide risk and control activities. Similar to MTSU's risk assessment reporting of 2019, the risk assessment documents are designated as confidential and were discussed in the non-public executive session of the Committee. The risk assessment reports were presented to the Committee for approval prior to the reports' submission to the State, as required by law.

Compliance and ERM Program Updates and Effectiveness; Annual Compliance Trainings Effectiveness – FERPA, Ethics, and HIPAA; DOJ Evaluation of Corporate Compliance Programs – 2020 Update – Information

Dr. Gené Stephens, Assistant Vice President for Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management, reported on the above-stated information items.

Motion

Trustee Martin made the motion to approve the action items recommended by the Committee and Trustee Freeman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken and the motion to approve the action items passed unanimously.

Committee Report: Finance and Personnel Committee

Trustee Jacobs reported that the Finance and Personnel Committee met on August 18, 2020. The Committee approved the minutes from its June 2, 2020 meeting. There were no action items for the Board’s consideration. Four (4) informational items were reported. Materials outlining these items were made available for review prior to the meeting and were included in the Board notebooks.

Budget - Information

Information was provided to the Committee related to: financial updates for fiscal year 2019-2020; updates concerning the use of the CARES Act funding and its impact on the budget; and, updates on the 2020-2021 budget.

Classified Employee Grievance Annual Report - Information

The Classified Employee Grievance Annual Report was presented to the Committee. T.C.A. § 49-8-117 requires each State University Board “shall provide an annual report to the education committee of the senate and the education committee of the house of representatives summarizing grievance activities of the previous year.” The report contained two (2) grievances for fiscal year July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020; one (1) concerning a termination in which the decision

was upheld, and the other still in progress.

Board Secretary's Report

The Board Secretary was delegated limited authority to make minor technical revisions in policies with the condition that a report be made to the Board of Trustees concerning any such revisions. Ms. Zimmerman stated that there were revisions to two (2) policies. Revisions to Policy 204 Tenure, and Policy 205 Promotion of Tenured and Tenurable Faculty, were approved by the Board on June 16, 2020. There were words inadvertently omitted and the additional revisions were made to correct the omissions.

Report of the President

Enrollment/Recruitment

Dr. McPhee gave a brief update on enrollment. He acknowledged concern about enrollment due to the impact of COVID-19. However, because of the good work of Student Affairs and the recruiters, the 14-day enrollment numbers just submitted to THEC reflect an overall enrollment increase at just under 2%. He stated that MTSU is the only university that showed an increase based on full-time equivalency, and is only two of the six institutions that showed an overall increase. Further, MTSU showed the largest increase. Dr. McPhee especially praised the efforts of Dean David Butler and his staff at the Graduate School and gave them credit for their work. The other reason that MTSU had the highest increase is due to the record high retention rates among continuing students. Dr. McPhee reminded the trustees that about five years ago, with university enrollment going down, a team was put together that developed a program called "Quest for Student Success" that put a lot of emphasis on supporting students in the classroom and supporting faculty. Investment in that program is now paying off. Recruitment for Fall 2021 is underway with recruiters at work, along with virtual campus tours.

COVID-19 Update

Dr. McPhee stated that for a Fall that looked totally different from last year due to COVID-19, a plan was put together to bring faculty, staff, and students back to the University. He asked

Andrew Oppmann to give an update on COVID-19 initiatives. He referenced the packet of information provided to each trustee and the weekly update that shows cumulative case counts of students and employees. Mr. Oppmann stated that two brochures were produced, one for faculty and staff, and one for students that include frequently asked questions as concerns returning to campus. These were mailed to the students along with a MT branded mask. Also in the packet were guidelines from Athletics for the return to Floyd Stadium for play.

Mr. Oppmann explained the overriding commitment to personal protective gear, safety, and the face covering requirement everyone is asked to follow. Cleaning protocols are in place and there are signs everywhere on the campus to remind people of the rules and asking them to stay safe. Provost Byrnes and his team came up with five (5) alternate academic delivery modes with about 40% of courses delivered in person, on campus. On-campus instruction for the fall semester will end the day before Thanksgiving. Spaces all over campus that were not intended to be classrooms have been turned into classrooms due to the hard work of Alan Thomas and his team. MTSU was the first university to announce going to single occupancy dorm rooms. Enormous care was taken in bringing in the residential population.

The staff of Health Services has been working around the clock, including Saturdays and Sundays, helping to provide testing and contact tracing services for students. About 107 private spaces have been set aside for quarantine spaces. Student support, including in-person telehealth counseling and virtual online tutoring and advising, has been available.

Home football games resumed with 20% capacity, or 7,000 spectators in the stands. Of those, 1000 are reserved for students. These reflect extreme social distancing measures in place, with signage and reordering of the seats in Floyd Stadium. On September 8, President McPhee announced zero tolerance for student groups and others who violate health policies. On September 4, President McPhee and Vice President Sells announced student organizations and activities would be limited to fewer than 50 participants. That followed a two-week moratorium against meetings or activities put in place at the start of the semester. Through a statewide

initiative, masks branded “MT Strong” were procured. Student Affairs partnered with Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority assembling 5000 kits that included these masks for students coming to campus.

A student-led team came up with ways to encourage their peers to wear masks and follow safety protocols; another team has been formed to do a similar effort for mental health. Finally, an email is sent every week reporting case counts, and the public website is updated once a week with the most current numbers and the number of quarantine spaces being occupied.

Trustee Baker stated that everyone involved in the last months has done a fabulous, focused job for the University and he commended everyone for their hard work. Vice Chair Freeman agreed but wondered about the low infection numbers at MTSU compared against other universities. Dr. McPhee responded that he restructured his leadership team since COVID-19 to put together an executive leadership team that meets frequently. It includes a physician, the head of the healthcare center and the director of athletics. The team tries to anticipate issues in order to be prepared to respond. He credited this proactive approach, such as implementation of single-occupancy residence rooms before the students returned to campus, for being able to maintain low numbers. Dr. McPhee also expressed confidence that the numbers are accurate. Chairman Smith stated that a reason for low numbers as opposed to institutions with higher infection rates is the difference in student demographics. Vice Chair Freeman asked if we are considering waste water testing; Dr. McPhee stated that this is under consideration.

Trustee Martin emphasized the extent of the work, time and energy faculty and staff have put in to make it look seamless. She also gave credit to the students for following the health and safety rules, and for working hard to understand that their role as a student has changed. She felt that this speaks to the collective community intensity and mission.

Mr. Oppmann added that the Information Technology Division installed video capture technology in the academic spaces. This allows students to attend remotely or to review the materials in case

they missed something or want to cover it again. This technology is something that will likely endure past the pandemic as a real teaching and learning tool for the University. Dr. McPhee reported the investment of over \$4 million for this instructional technology.

Dr. Sells added that steps were taken to get ahead of infectious outbreaks. She stated that some student organizations are going through the student judicial process through the Student Conduct Office because they were not doing what they needed to do. From July until September 13, there have been a total of 203 cases on campus, and great attention is given to these numbers. She stated that the conservative approach MTSU is taking has made a difference, along with taking decisive action when needed.

Trustee Freeman asked if an outbreak occurred, whether the campus has the capacity to handle that. Dr. McPhee responded that there are 107 private apartments available for quarantine. Dr. Sells said that students who live off campus are responsible for their own quarantining. For those on campus, meals and snacks are provided, and the Student Health clinic touches base with them every day to make sure they are doing OK. Dr. McPhee stated that he meets with Athletics and the medical staff every Wednesday to track and keep up with developments in the athletic department and sports. Athletics has an additional 38 beds for quarantine and isolation of student athletes who live off campus. Mr. Massaro stated that about one third of student athletes live on campus, two thirds or 15% live off campus.

Vice Chair Freeman asked how frequently football players are tested. Mr. Massaro replied that on game weeks they test three times a week: right after competition on the weekend, then the following Tuesday and Thursday. Dr. McPhee gave credit to Chairman Smith for making the connection with Path Group which is able to provide test results quickly. The other student athletes (non-football players) are subject to surveillance testing at a rate of about 20% per week. Prior to a competition, an entire team is tested.

Vice Chair Freeman asked if expanded capacity for testing is being considered. Dr. McPhee replied that several faculty and staff have been tested at the campus health clinic. Trustee Freeman expressed the concern that there are asymptomatic students on campus that have not been tested who are spreading the virus. Dr. McPhee explained that contact tracing is used to identify individuals who have been in contact with others who test positive for the virus.

Concluding Remarks

Chairman Smith stated that staff and leadership have done a great job, and that it is no coincidence that enrollment is up because it was announced that the campus would be open and students want to be on campus. He expressed his appreciation for the diligence of the staff.

Adjournment

Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 2:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heidi Zimmerman". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Heidi Zimmerman

Board Secretary