

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

The Middle Tennessee State University Board of Trustees met on April 6, 2021, 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 Army Sergeant Jessica Pierson. Sergeant Pierson was raised in Germany, where her father was stationed in the Army, is an Army wife, and an Army widow. Sergeant Pierson enlisted in the Army and was assigned to 101st Airborne Division Air Assault at Fort Campbell. She deployed to combat in Iraq, and after losing her husband, completed her original tour of duty and was honorably discharged.

While a student at MTSU, Sergeant Pierson was a student worker, helping other veterans. Sergeant Pierson recently graduated from MTSU with a Bachelor of Science Degree. She has rejoined the military in the Tennessee Army National Guard and is employed as the Transition Manager at the Daniels Center. Sergeant Pierson stated that she enjoyed working with other veterans as a student worker at MTSU, which led her to pursue her current position at the Daniels Center.

Roll Call

Acting Board Secretary Jeff Farrar called the roll. The following trustees were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Tom Boyd, Pete DeLay, Darrell Freeman, Chris Karbowskiak, Mary Martin, Stephen Smith, Pam Wright, and Delanie McDonald. A quorum was declared.

President Sidney A. McPhee; 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; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Brenda Burkhart, Chief Audit Executive; Jeff Farrar, Associate University Counsel and Acting Board Secretary; and, Kim Edgar, Executive Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, were also in attendance.

Request to Address the Board - Action

The Board received a request from Mr. Braxton Coleman, a student at MTSU, to address the Board. Though the request was timely submitted, the meeting agenda had already been finalized and posted. Vice Chairman Freeman made a motion to amend the agenda to allow Mr. Coleman the opportunity to address the Board. Trustee Baker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Braxton Coleman – Address to the Board

Chairman Smith welcomed Mr. Braxton Coleman, a senior at MTSU, to the podium. Mr. Coleman spoke about his concerns with the police response to a protest on campus, the University's response to the COVID pandemic and his belief that the University has under-reported COVID infections and hospitalizations in the student body. Mr. Coleman also expressed other concerns that students of color have experienced and are experiencing on the MTSU campus.

After expiration of Mr. Coleman's time to speak, Vice Chairman Freeman requested that he be provided additional time to speak. Chairman Smith declined. Vice Chairman Freeman thanked Mr. Coleman for his courage for appearing and sharing with the Board information they may not know and encouraged him to return to speak at future meetings of the Board of Trustees.

Approval of Minutes – Action

The next action item was approval of the minutes from the December 8, 2020 Board Meeting. Trustee DeLay made the motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2020 meeting, and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2020 meeting of the Board passed unanimously.

Motion to Amend the Agenda – Action

Chairman Smith noted that Vice Chairman Freeman had requested that an item be added to the agenda to allow him to make a presentation to the Board. Although the request was timely received, the meeting agenda had already been finalized, and an amendment of the agenda was required to allow Vice Chairman Freeman’s presentation. Both Trustee Karbowskiak and Chairman Smith expressed concern about the need for more specific rules regarding requests to address the Board of Trustees, requests for addition of items to the agenda, disclosure of materials included in such presentations, and the timing of such matters. Chairman Smith requested that the Acting Secretary prepare a draft of such rules for the Board’s consideration at a future meeting. Trustee Delay and Chairman Smith also expressed that matters that members of the Board of Trustees wish to be heard and considered by the Board should originate in Board Committees.

Trustee Karbowskiak made a motion to amend the agenda to allow Vice Chairman Freeman’s presentation. Trustee Wright seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed.

Presentation to Board – Vice Chairman Freeman

Chairman Smith stated that there was no time limit for Vice Chairman Freeman’s remarks. Vice Chairman Freeman stated that he wished to address “our collective promise to all our students, especially our Black male students” and that these students “are not experiencing the promise that we have talked about.” Vice Chairman Freeman acknowledged that “this is not a new

problem, or a problem that we have alone, it is a problem that has reached epic proportions on our campus.” He stated that “a Pell grant, Black, first-generation male student coming to school here has a 10.5% chance . . . to graduate in four years. That’s completely unacceptable.” In addition, Vice Chairman Freeman noted that African-American students were dropping out of school at a disproportionate rate, with significant financial costs to themselves and the University. Vice Chairman Freeman noted MTSU’s success in maintaining a 90% six-year graduation rate for African-American student-athletes and his desire to make similar efforts and achieve similar results for African-American students who were not student-athletes. Vice Chairman Freeman stated the African-American student population at MTSU from 2015 to now is on the decline and requested more emphasis on recruiting and retaining African-American students.

Motion to Include Discussion of Efforts Related to Success of African-American Students on Future Board of Trustees Meeting Agendas – Action

Vice Chairman Freeman made a motion that the issues related to the success of African-American students be included on the agenda of every Board of Trustees meeting until sustained positive results are achieved, including actual target numbers as it relates to staff, professors, deans, African-American graduation rates, and that the Board of Trustees should allow the support of this initiative.

Trustee Boyd commended Vice Chairman Freeman’s passion and persistence in pursuing this issue and commended him on his interest in the success of Black students. Trustee Boyd also noted that he counted 14 programs to address under-represented minority Pell grant students, which is a significant effort to address this issue. Vice Chairman Freeman responded that under Dr. McPhee’s leadership, MTSU has put in the effort and is going to do more. President McPhee stated Vice Chairman Freeman has been invited to participate in a group that is attempting to address work on the graduation rate of minority students. Dr. McPhee also noted that the University has many staff members focused on this issue, who are doing a good job of

addressing the concerns raised by Vice Chairman Freeman. Vice Chairman Freeman applauded Dr. McPhee, his leadership, and his team for the work that's been done.

Vice Chairman Freeman's motion failed for lack of a second.

Committee Report: Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics

Committee Chair Pam Wright reported that the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on March 16, 2021. The Committee approved the minutes from the November 10, 2020 meeting. The Committee report contained four (4) action items, unanimously approved by the Committee, for the Board's consideration. All items were presented by Provost Mark Byrnes. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

Approval of Expedited Tenure – Action

First, Dr. Byrnes presented two requests for approval of expedited tenure. Policy 204 Tenure, Section VII provides that “[t]he University may find it necessary to expedite tenure review in order to recruit high-quality faculty for administrative positions. Departmental input regarding tenure for an administrator is necessary since tenure is awarded in a specific department.” Professor Kenneth Currie, Department Chair of Engineering Technology, and Professor Kathleen Schmand, Dean of Walker Library, were recently hired into administrative positions. These faculty members have been reviewed for tenure by their department chair and dean according to MTSU Policy 204 Tenure and their respective college and department policies. The President and University Provost recommend that tenure be granted effective April 6, 2021.

Revision to Policy 50 Timely Reporting of a Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the SACSCOC – Action

Dr. Byrnes presented information regarding approval of revision to Policy 50 Timely Reporting of a Substantive Change for Accredited Institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC). SACSCOC adopted a revised Substantive Change

Policy and Procedures in December, 2020. The proposed revision to Policy 50 clarifies and updates the University's substantive change policy and procedures to align with SACSCOC requirements.

New Academic Degree Programs: Bachelor of Business Administration in Supply Chain Management; Bachelor of Science in Media Management; Bachelor of Science in Photography – Action

Dr. Byrnes presented a request for approval of three (3) new academic degree programs. 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. Proposed new academic programs were:

- Elevation of the existing concentration in Supply Chain Management within the Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.) in Management to a free-standing B.B.A. degree with a major in Supply Chain Management to be effective Summer 2021.
- Elevation of the existing concentration in Media Management within the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Media and Entertainment to a free-standing B.S. degree with a major in Media Management to be effective Summer 2021.
- Elevation of the existing concentration in Photography within the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Media and Entertainment to a free-standing B.S. degree with a major in Photography to be effective Summer 2021.

Degree under Consideration: Master of Fine Arts in Independent Film and Television – Action

Dr. Byrnes presented a request for approval of degree under consideration – Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), Independent Film and Television. 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 SCH and notification to the institutional governing board, the institution may submit a Letter of Notification to THEC.” Pending the results of feasibility studies, the University may submit a Letter of Notification to THEC seeking to create, within the Department of Media Arts in the College of Media and Entertainment, a M.F.A. in Independent Film and Television.

The program would be composed of three tracks: Documentary; Creative Producing; and Live Event TV. The program's focal tracks create a unique offering both in the region and the state. Film and TV remain burgeoning industries, as noted by the Atlanta Film Commission. Additional supporting factors include the program-ready infrastructure, strong faculty representation in the track areas, and a clear advantage in the rapidly growing documentary market. Finally, based on the interest already expressed for this degree, this program would offer a diverse student body, including many first-generation college students, an accessible and affordable means to career advancement, as well as offering those with established careers a means of transitioning to a terminal degree to teach.

Annual Report of Academic Program Actions – Information

Presentation Addressing Achievement Gaps Initiatives – Information

Dr. Byrnes reported on the above-referenced information items.

Motion

Trustee Baker made the motion to approve the action items recommended by the Committee and Trustee Boyd seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and motion carried.

Committee Report: Audit and Compliance Committee

Committee Chair Pete DeLay reported the Audit and Compliance Committee met on March 16, 2021. The Committee approved the minutes from its November 10, 2020 meeting. The Committee report contained one (1) action item, unanimously approved by the Committee, to be considered and voted on 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.

Revision to Policy 25 Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Nondiscrimination – Action

Ms. Christy Sigler, Interim Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and Compliance,

presented Policy 25 Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Nondiscrimination. The proposed revisions were drafted to reflect the adoption of MTSU Policy 29 Title IX Compliance and to update job titles and terminology. Due to discussion concerning terminology, wording, and references, Policy 25 was not approved. Additional revisions to Policy 25 will be considered and presented again at the next Committee meeting.

Revision to Policy 90 Athletic Integrity and Conduct of Athletics Staff – Action

Ms. Gené Stephens, Assistant Vice-President, Office of Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management, presented Policy 90 Athletic Integrity and Conduct of Athletics Staff. The proposed revisions were drafted to clarify that matters covered by the University’s discrimination-based investigation policies (Policies 26, 27, and 29) and matters covered by NCAA or Conference-USA rules are not subject to review under Policy 90. In addition, cross-references and policy names were updated and corrected. Revisions to Policy 90 Athletic Integrity and Conduct of Athletics Staff were unanimously approved by the Committee.

Report of Conflict of Interest Disclosures in 2020 – Information

Review of President’s Statement of Disclosure of Interests for 2021 – Information

Report on Compliance with Public Records Policy – Information

Results of Five External Reviews – Information

Quarterly Report of Results of Internal Audit Reports – Information

Information was presented on the above-referenced information items.

The Committee went into executive session to discuss audits, investigations, and litigation.

Motion

Trustee DeLay made the motion to approve the action item recommended by the Committee and Trustee Karbowski seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the action item carried.

Committee Report: Executive and Governance Committee

Trustee DeLay reported that the Executive and Governance Committee met on March 16, 2021. The Committee approved the minutes from its March 17, 2020 meeting. The Committee report contained one (1) action item, unanimously approved by the Committee, to be considered and voted on by the Board. Materials outlining the action item were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

Institutional Mission/Mission Profile – Action

T.C.A. §49-8-101(d) requires the institution to annually submit its institutional mission statement to THEC for review and approval. On February 12, 2021, the University Planning Committee reviewed the mission statement and mission profile. It approved revisions to the mission profile, which were then reviewed and approved by the President. Once approved by the Board, the mission statement and mission profile will be provided to THEC to fulfill this statutory requirement. Dr. Mary Hoffschwelle, Associate Provost, presented the revisions to the University's institutional mission statement and mission profile.

Motion

Trustee Boyd made the motion to approve the action items recommended by the Committee and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. Chairman Smith asked if the stated date of the prior Committee minutes was correct. Acting Board Secretary Farrar confirmed that the date was correct. A voice vote was taken and motion carried.

Committee Report: Finance and Personnel Committee

Trustee Boyd reported that the Finance and Personnel Committee met on March 16, 2021. The Committee approved the minutes from its November 10, 2020 meeting. The Committee report contained three (3) actions items, unanimously approved by the Committee, to be considered and voted on by the Board. 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.

Revision to Policy 641 Student Fees-Incidental Charges and Refunds – Action

Mr. Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance, presented a request to update Policy 641 Student Fees–Incidental Charges and Refunds to include the charging of maintenance fees and tuition for the Winter Session (Section VI.A.3.).

Revision to Policy 730 Campus Crisis and Emergency Management – Action

Mr. Thomas also presented a request to update Policy 730 Campus Crisis and Emergency Management to evaluate needs and provide guidance to ensure continuity of instruction, research, and service and to maintain quality and integrity of courses and programs. Other revisions included minor edits and corrections.

Capital Disclosures - Action

Mr. Bill Waits presented for approval a summary of proposed revisions to the Fiscal Year 21/22 Capital Budget Disclosure list.

Budget Updates – Information

Composite Financial Index – Information

The Committee received a report on the above-referenced information items.

The Committee also voted to remove CFI from regular reporting to the Finance and Personnel Committee.

Motion

Trustee DeLay made the motion to approve the action items recommended by the Committee and Trustee Wright seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and motion carried.

Board Secretary's Report

The Board Secretary has been delegated the limited authority to make technical revisions to policies and report them to the Board to notify them of the revisions being made. Acting Board Secretary Farrar reported that there were two technical revisions to report:

- Policy 29 Title IX Compliance was revised on January 7, 2021 to replace the name and email address of the retired Assistant Vice President for Institutional Equity and Compliance (Marian Wilson) with the name and email address of the Interim Vice President for Institutional Equity and Compliance (Christy Sigler).
- Policy 605 Reports of Expenditures by the President was revised on January 14, 2021 to change responsible division from President's Division to Business and Finance.

Report of the President

Dr. McPhee opened his report by commending Mr. Braxton Coleman for his presentation to the Board. Dr. McPhee stated that the information he had previously provided to the Board, that no University students had been hospitalized as a result of COVID-19, was accurate based on information available to the University. Dr. McPhee also noted that he has previously reached out to Mr. Coleman and requested that he serve on the Social Justice Committee. Dr. McPhee reiterated that he was proud of the work that University medical personnel has done with regards to COVID-19.

Enrollment/Recruitment

Dr. McPhee gave a brief update on enrollment and recruitment. He acknowledged that the decisions by highly selective colleges, including Ivy League and state flagship universities, to eliminate SAT and ACT test requirements have resulted in a surge in applications to those institutions. Because more students are eligible for those institutions, it is impacting regional institutions, like MTSU. He also noted that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the high schools have not been open and, as a result, University representatives have been unable to meet with counselors and students, which has been a major challenge for the University's recruitment efforts. Additionally, high school guidance counselors have been working remotely,

resulting in a decrease in the number of high school transcripts and documents needed to complete applications for admission.

As of April 1, 2021, MTSU has received more than 10,000 freshman applications, which is down by just over 7% since last year at this time. MTSU has admitted 6,717 new freshman, which is a decrease of 10% since last year. An admission yield rate of 45% of those admitted students is needed to maintain freshman enrollment consistent with last year. As of April 1, MTSU's transfer applications are also down 5.7% and transfer admissions are down by just 2%. Dr. McPhee is confident that the new transfer class for Fall 2021 will meet, and perhaps exceed, last fall's numbers. Dr. McPhee congratulated Dr. Sells and her staff on their efforts.

COVID-19 Update

Dr. McPhee reported that MTSU began administering the COVID-19 vaccine in the lobby of the Student Health and Wellness Center and in the School of Nursing on February 25, 2021. As of Monday, March 29, the School of Nursing has administered 2,650 vaccines and the Health Service Center has administered 2,194, for a total so far of 4,849. On April 12, the vaccination effort will expand to the Student Union. The Division of Marketing and Communication and Student Health Services have begun an awareness campaign entitled "Don't Miss Your Shot" to raise awareness and encourage students to be vaccinated. Dr. McPhee commended Vice President for Marketing and Communications, Andrew Oppmann, and his staff for their success in the campaign.

Airport

Dr. McPhee updated the Board on the status of the Aerospace program and ongoing discussions with the Murfreesboro Airport. The success of MTSU's Aerospace program, which is ranked in the top five in the nation, has led to an enrollment growth in that program. This growth has been further accelerated by the Delta Airline's selection of MTSU as an area for hiring. This growth has created some degree of tension with the airport.

The Murfreesboro Airport has been the program's base of operations for many years and MTSU has enjoyed a strong and mutually beneficial partnership with the City. MTSU's fuel purchases and other fees have been a major source of revenue for the Airport. MTSU's partnership with the Airport on a grant application resulted in a \$1,000,000 grant to fund a ramp expansion. In return, the Airport has been a convenient and safe location for MTSU students to fly.

Dr. McPhee noted the significant growth in the number of students, from 319 in Fall 2013 to 886 in Fall 2020, has increased the number of training flights. Dr. McPhee and Chairman Smith have had numerous conversations with city officials to discuss ways to mitigate noise complaints resulting from increased air traffic. MTSU has begun exploring the possibility of using nearby airports for operation and also looking at another site at other area airports that will accommodate the future needs of the large number of professional pilot students.

Legislative Update

Dr. McPhee reported that MTSU has had two budget hearings before the General Assembly, in the House Ways and Means Committee on February 22 and the Senate Education Committee on February 24. The Committees raised general questions about the impact of the pandemic specifically on future capital outlay products, projects, and online delivery of courses. Other questions also centered on federal stimulus funding being received and specifically the student aid portion. Dr. McPhee reported that both Committees unanimously passed the University budget for this year.

Finance and Personnel Committee Follow-Up

Dr. McPhee provided additional information in response to a question raised by Chairman Smith in a recent Finance and Personnel Committee meeting regarding the University's economic impact to Rutherford County related to its capital projects. Over the past five years, MTSU's construction and renovation projects have input \$121 million into the local economy.

Fundraising

Fundraising continues to remain strong. MTSU is at \$8.6 million for the year, over \$2 million more than this time last year. In February, MTSU completed another successful True Blue giving campaign, raising \$461,000 from 836 individuals in only three days. Dr. McPhee was pleased to report that 150 of that 836 were first-time givers to the University.

Dr. McPhee concluded by thanking members of the Board for their commitment and time. Some of these issues faced by the University are very difficult, but MTSU will continue to assess where improvement is needed and will continue to look at areas to strengthen and work towards making this one of the top universities in the country.

Vice Chairman Freeman stated he understood that the Murfreesboro Airport has become one of the busiest airports in the state. He noted that on one day the Murfreesboro Airport had more landings and takeoffs than the Nashville International Airport. Vice Chairman Freeman stated that with that amount of traffic there is an unsafe element to having that many landings and takeoffs without a tower. Vice Chairman Freeman expressed his gratitude that the University was working with the Murfreesboro Airport to find other locations to accommodate some of the landings. President McPhee responded that he is very much aware of that issue and the safety of the students in the area is the number one priority.

Chairman Smith commented that the next couple of years will be a tremendous challenge in terms of graduating students. He commented on the fantastic opportunity accompanying the growth of the Aerospace program to become the #1 aviation school in the country.

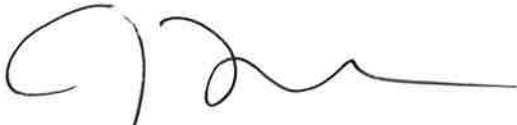
Trustee Baker asked if the Board could be on record as sending congratulations to Emily Howse for her new appointment of heading up THEC. Vice Chairman Freeman stated he has been working with Dr. Howse and she has been outstanding.

Trustee Boyd commended MTSU for being on the Princeton Review, a student-determined recognition.

Adjournment

Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jeff Farrar
Acting Board Secretary

