

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES

The Middle Tennessee State University Board of Trustees met on June 11, 2024, 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 1:06 p.m. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Keith Huber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introduction of Student Veteran

Gen. Huber introduced Coast Guard veteran Tamara Costello, who served four years on active duty and two more years on multiple tours as a reservist. Gen. Huber highlighted that the Coast Guard motto is “Always Ready” and that Costello followed the example of her sister in serving our country by that phrase. She shared that she joined the Coast Guard at nineteen and was initially assigned to a small base adjacent to the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California, primarily focused on rescue missions. The military provided stability, job opportunities, rigorous training, and educational support, which allowed her to start her collegiate experience. However, life challenges interrupted her college career. After her son started college, Ms. Costello contacted the Charlie and Hazel Daniels Center for assistance in resuming her academic journey. The Center worked diligently to retrieve her previous college credits and steered her to scholarships for non-traditional students. She proudly now has her Bachelor of Science in Integrated Studies and Master of Arts in Liberal Arts, thanks to the Charlie and Hazel Daniels Center here at MTSU, which makes her a double MTSU graduate like her son. Ms. Costello is a Scholars Week 2024 winner for her capstone project – “Empowering Young Learners: Nutrition Label Analysis with the HealthNUTZ App.”

Roll Call

Board Secretary James Floyd called the roll. The following trustees were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Pete DeLay, Bill Jones, Mary Martin, Molly Mihm, Steve Smith, Chris Karbowski Vanek, and Michael Wade. Trustees Tom Boyd and Pam Wright participated in the meeting electronically. Consistent with Tennessee Code Annotated § 8-44-108(c)(3), Trustees Boyd and Wright were asked and responded in the affirmative that they could hear clearly and confirmed that no one else was in their respective locations with them. A quorum was declared.

President Sidney A. McPhee; Mark Byrnes, University Provost; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; Yvette Clark, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Leah Ladley, Chief Audit Executive; James Floyd, University Counsel and Board Secretary; and Kim Edgar, Executive Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, were also in attendance.

Approval of March 19, 2024, Meeting Minutes – Action

The first agenda item was approval of the minutes from the March 19, 2024, meeting. Trustee DeLay made the motion to approve the minutes from the March 19, 2024, meeting, and Trustee Baker seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was approved unanimously.

Committee Report: Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee

Committee Chair Wright reported that the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on May 21, 2024. The Committee approved the minutes from the February 27, 2024, meeting. The Committee report contained one action, which was unanimously approved for the Board's consideration. Information items included a report on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and an Athletics update. Materials outlining these matters were

made available for review prior to the Board meeting and are contained in the Board notebooks.

Tenure and Promotion Candidates – Action

Provost Byrnes reported to the Committee that faculty members applied for tenure and/or promotion in September 2023. They have been reviewed by their department chair/school director, department/school committee, college committee, college dean, provost, and president as stipulated by MTSU Policies 204 Tenure and 205 Promotion of Tenured and Tenurable Faculty along with their respective college and department policies. The president and university provost recommended that these faculty be granted tenure and/or promotion effective August 1, 2024. The Committee unanimously approved the thirty-four (34) candidates recommended for tenure and fifty-five (55) candidates for promotion.

Motion

Committee Chair Wright made the motion to approve the action item recommended by the Committee, and Trustee Jones seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion to approve the action item was carried unanimously.

Committee Report: Audit and Compliance Committee

Committee Chair Boyd reported that the Audit and Compliance Committee met on May 21, 2024. The Committee approved the minutes from its February 27, 2024, meeting. The Committee report contained no action items. Information items included the annual internal audit assurances; results of External Reviews: TN Department of Finance and Administration, Office of Criminal Justice Programs Monitoring Report for STOP contract and TN Department of Safety and Homeland Security, TN Highway Safety Office Compliance Report for High Visibility Enforcement of TN Traffic Safety Laws; and the quarterly report – internal audit report resulting in improvements to the system of internal controls.

The public meeting of the Committee adjourned, and the Committee went into executive session to discuss cybersecurity, security plans, investigations, and audits.

Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and are contained in the Board notebooks.

Committee Report: Finance and Personnel Committee

Committee Chair DeLay reported that the Finance and Personnel Committee met on May 21, 2024. The Committee approved the minutes from its February 27, 2024, meeting. The Committee report contained seven action items, which were unanimously approved for consideration by the Board. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

Permanent Appointment of Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students – Action
Policy 808 Compensation Reporting and Approvals requires the Board of Trustees to approve the appointment and salary recommendation of Vice Presidents or other executives reporting directly to the President. President McPhee recommended the appointment of Dr. Khalilah T. Doss as Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students and approval of the salary requested. After a thorough discussion of the University’s interview and hiring process, the Committee unanimously approved this new appointment.

Capital Outlay Project Submittal – Action

Bill Waits, Assistant Vice President for Campus Planning, presented the proposed MTSU capital outlay request for FY 2025-2026, which includes Civic Leadership and Applied Humanities Building that will provide academic classrooms, class labs, faculty and staff offices, and support space for selected Liberal Arts departments and the associated Center for Innovation and Leadership, History Museum, and MTSU archives and exhibit spaces. The Committee unanimously approved the proposed capital outlay request for FY 2025-26.

Capital Disclosures – Action

Mr. Waits also presented plans to submit projects as part of the 2025-2026 Capital Budget Request, which includes redisclosures for Addition and Renovations to the Murphy Center and the Multi-Sport Indoor Practice Facility along with new projects for the Floyd Stadium Turf Replacement and Reese Smith Jr. Field Turf installation. The Committee unanimously approved the recommended capital disclosures.

Capital Maintenance Projects Submittal – Action

Joe Whitefield, Assistant Vice President for Facilities Services, presented the request submittal to THEC, which includes capital maintenance requests for thirteen (13) projects for FY 2025-2026 totaling \$23,500,000.00 and a summary of capital maintenance project requests for an additional four years, FY 2026-2027 through FY 2029-2030. The Committee unanimously approved the capital maintenance projects submittal.

Approval of Proposed Tuition, Fees, and Housing Rates – Action

Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance, presented this report. For 2024-2025, THEC approved binding ranges for undergraduate in-state tuition and the combined undergraduate in-state tuition plus mandatory fees at 0-5.5% in alignment with the Governor's Budget. The Committee reviewed the recommendation for a 5.39% increase in undergraduate, graduate, and out-of-state tuition rates. In addition, increases to five (5) mandatory fees were recommended. The annual tuition and mandatory fees increase for an undergraduate in-state student taking 15 credit hours would be \$518, or a 5.24% overall increase, in compliance with

THEC's combined range. A proposed 3.5% increase in housing rates was also reviewed. The Committee unanimously approved the proposed tuition, fees, and housing rates.

Trustee DeLay noted that public notice of the proposed increases to tuition and mandatory fees was properly given and that public comments were received and made available for review consistent with Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-7-1603.

Compensation Plan – Action

Lisa Batey, Interim Assistant Vice President for Human Resources, presented the compensation plan. The Governor's Budget provided partial funding for a 3% salary pool for higher education. The University administration recommended using the salary funding received by the State to provide employees with a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA), which equates to a 2.0% increase with a \$750 minimum. This allows employees earning \$37,500 or less to receive the \$750 increase while other employee increases will be based on 2.0% of their annual salary. The administration also recommended increasing faculty promotion awards by \$2500, representing the first increase since 2012-13. Additional salary increases will be brought to the Committee at the November meeting once fall enrollment numbers have been finalized. The Committee unanimously approved the proposed compensation plan.

Operating Budgets – Action

Drew Harpool, Associate Vice President for Business and Finance, presented this report. The estimated budget is the final budget for the fiscal year and reflects adjustments needed for spring enrollment, additional funding provided through state appropriations, and other miscellaneous adjustments. The July budget is a base budget for the upcoming fiscal year. It is based on tuition and fee increases, salary and operating appropriation increases approved by

the General Assembly for 2024-25, and a flat enrollment. The Committee unanimously approved the 2023-24 Estimate Budget and the 2024-25 July Budget.

Motion

Committee Chair DeLay made the motion to approve the seven (7) action items recommended by the Committee, and Trustee Wade seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion to approve the action items was carried unanimously.

Introduction of Dr. Khalilah Doss

Chairman Smith invited Dr. Khalilah Doss to speak. Dr. Doss expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to join President McPhee's cabinet and continue the work they have been doing to move MTSU forward. Dr. Doss noted that she had some trepidation about making a job transition, but those fears waned as she researched MTSU. Then, they were ultimately eliminated when she came to campus. Dr. Doss stated that she believes in meeting students not just where they are but also where they dream, as higher education is one of the greatest tools for dreamers. She shared that she is a first-generation college student who happened to be a student-athlete and was allowed to chase her dreams through higher education. While her dreams have changed over the trajectory of her life, she is thankful and blessed to have been a part of the ecosystem of people who have been her mentors and invested in her as a person. She hopes to do the same for MTSU's students. Dr. Doss and her family are ecstatic to join the community, and she looks forward to joining everyone on the journey of service to the students who will call MTSU home.

Recognition of Student Trustee Molly Mihm

Chairman Smith recognized Molly Mihm for her service as the 7th MTSU Student Trustee and wished her well in her future endeavors. Trustee Mihm thanked the Student Government Association and President McPhee for the opportunity to serve on the Board. With career

aspirations in higher education, she has learned so much throughout this experience from both the administration and her fellow trustees.

Report of Board Secretary

Board Secretary James Floyd advised that under Policy 30, the following minor technical policy revisions have been made:

- Policy 811 Personnel Records - revised to correct a grammatical error;
- Policy 825 Leave Policies - revised to correct grammatical errors;
- Policy 840 Retirement - revised to replace a repealed statutory citation, Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-35-403, with the current applicable citation, Tenn. Code Ann. § 8-25-204; and
- Policy 852 Administrative, Professional, and Faculty Grievance or Complaint - revised to add hyperlinks to relevant forms.

Appointment of Student Trustee - Action

Article 4.5 of the Board bylaws notes that the appointment of student representatives will be for a term of one year. President McPhee gave a summary of the selection process for the Student Trustee. The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Student Government Association manage the process. Applications are submitted to the Student Government Association (SGA) Office. The SGA Executive Board reviews the applications and selects applicants to be interviewed. After interviews with the selected candidates, the three finalists' applications are sent to the Office of the President. President McPhee then personally interviews the top three applicants and makes a recommendation for the Board.

President McPhee recommended Ms. Shaylaine Roker as our next Student Trustee. Ms. Roker is a junior in the Jones College of Business. She is an excellent academic student and an active member of the Student Government Association. She works as a Resident Assistant and participates in several professional and social organizations.

Vice Chair Vanek made the motion to accept the recommendation of Ms. Shaylaine Roker as the student representative for the MTSU Board of Trustees, and Trustee Wade seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion to approve the action item was carried unanimously.

Report of the President

President McPhee thanked the Board for the opportunity to give updates on matters and activities at the University since the last meeting.

President McPhee provided an update on recruitment and enrollment for the fall 2024 academic year. Total enrollment compared to last year is up by 1.42%. This is a significant achievement in the context of our increase in the previous academic year. It is a testament to the good being done by the admissions staff, the graduate school, faculty, and staff. He noted the impact of the FAFSA challenges and the potential effects on MTSU, which has the largest number of Pell-eligible and first-generation college students in the State. We have made significant efforts to mitigate the damage, but real concerns remain. New undergraduates are currently up nearly 2%, and we are not even halfway through CUSTOMS Orientation with twelve (12) more sessions to come. Also, new graduate enrollment for fall 2024 is up 1.2% as of this morning. President McPhee thanked Dr. Laurie Witherow, Dr. David Butler, academic deans, and faculty for their efforts in keeping our enrollment headed in a positive direction.

President McPhee reminded the Board that he appointed a Compensation Committee earlier this year to look into developing an incentive or merit pay system. The committee is comprised of faculty, administrators, and classified staff. It has been researching peer institutions where similar plans are implemented, analyzing current performance review processes, and discussing possible timelines. The first action item in developing this system will be to revise the current performance evaluation system used for faculty to be similar to the one used for administrative and support staff. A committee sub-group has been established to develop a faculty evaluation

process that is in alignment with the varying responsibilities of individual faculty across the campus.

President McPhee also provided an update on the University's work with the Nashville School of Law. A Letter of Notification (LON) was recently approved by THEC staff for an M.S. in Legal Studies. In addition, a group from Nashville School of Law and MTSU Jones College of Business are working on the New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP), including finalizing curriculum and resources. The goal is to have the NAPP to THEC by early fall and to provide SACSCOC notification by its next bi-annual deadline, July 1. President McPhee emphasized that this project is a high priority.

On April 24, the University formally announced the launch of the long-anticipated renovation and restoration of Kirksey Old Main (KOM) and Rutledge Hall, two of the five original structures erected when MTSU was founded in 1911. The State and the University have invested 54.3 million dollars into the project. Upon completing this project, Rutledge Hall will house University Studies, while KOM will continue to be home to the Mathematics, Computer Science, and Data Science departments. This project is anticipated to be completed by the summer of 2026.

President McPhee then shared news of recent recognitions of outstanding MTSU individuals and departments. Last week, through the efforts of the Mathematics Department, we received notification that MTSU has been named a Center of Actuarial Excellence (CAE) by the Society of Actuaries. CAE is the top tier of recognition that the Society bestows on actuarial programs, and MTSU joins a list of only 20 existing CAEs in the United States and 40 globally in this category. He commended the Mathematics Department for their hard work.

On May 31st, the Tennessee CIO ORBIE® Awards ceremony was held in Nashville to honor chief information officers (CIOs) who have demonstrated excellence in technology leadership. MTSU's CIO, Ms. Yvette Clark, was one of the five finalists in the Government/Public Sector category and

the only higher education IT leader recognized. He congratulated Ms. Clark for this honor and the recognition it brings to the University.

MTSU recently received eleven (11) Telly Awards, a national and international competition recognizing excellence in video programming and production. MTSU received the awards for:

- “Out of the Blue” TV program, in particular, the 50th Anniversary of Murphy Center and Joys of the Season;
- “We Do It All” commercial, which debuted at the April 2023 Board meeting; and
- The student-run “Middle Tennessee News and Student Voice.”

Additional awards included one Gold, six Silver, and four Bronze trophies. President McPhee congratulated the College of Media and Entertainment, the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Education, Athletics, and the Division of Marketing and Communications.

MTSU was also recognized at the 2024 Tennessee College Public Relations Association gathering for telling stories of numerous colleges and units. MTSU was the most-honored institution in the competition among the state's private and public universities, receiving 16 awards, eight of which were Gold, the highest honor.

Lastly, President McPhee reminded the Board that on June 21st, Mr. James Floyd and he will appear before the Tennessee Historical Commission for the final hearing regarding MTSU’s petition to remove the name Forrest Hall from the ROTC building. He will keep the Board informed of the outcome.

Conclusion

President McPhee thanked the Trustees for allowing him the time to give his report.

Adjournment

Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 2:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James C. Floyd, Board Secretary