

### **Chair's Report from Dean's Cabinet Meeting of September 3.**

Wednesday was the monthly Dean's Cabinet Meeting. I wanted to get this information out to you now rather than waiting for our next meeting as budget issues will be unfolding over the next couple of weeks. Some of you may have already heard this from your Deans. Following are my notes, fyi.

(1) The Provost reported that enrollment is down more than was anticipated. The number after Tuesday evening's purge was 4.9%, much higher than the predicted 3.0-3.5%. Decreased enrollment results in decreased tuition which impacts this year's budget. Total deficit for this year is \$8.3 million, with Academic Affairs portion being \$5.9 million. While the Provost informed the Chairs at our last meeting that he had to come up with \$3.5 million, due to anticipated lower than expected enrollment he now has to come up with \$5.9 million. He has already identified \$2 million which has been returned to the university, so he is looking at a \$4 million gap. At our last Chair's meeting he stated that those departments that had lost tenure track faculty last year should go ahead and submit their justifications for hire to his office. This is still true. However, decisions will be pending for the next 2-3 weeks as they develop a strategy for the \$4 million gap. He related that teaching loads, release time, FTTs and Adjuncts are being considered in the strategy. Enrollment at other TBR schools is also down: Memphis 4.5%, ETSU 1.6%, APSU 2.8%, and all the community colleges had lower enrollment. The only schools with enrollment increases were Tennessee Tech at 2% and TSU at 3.7%. The question was asked, if we are down 4.9% in enrollment, yet we have the tuition increase for all enrolled students, math would indicate that we should only have a deficit of \$1.5 million (not \$8.3 million), what happened to the funds generated by the tuition increase? No answer was provided for this question at this time.

(2) It was reported that the MTSU retention rate has increased 4% based on the fall enrollment. There is a team working on retention strategies who will be making recommendations to Dr. Sluder when he comes on board September 15. Some of the strategies discussed were having a 250 mile radius for in-state tuition which is already in place at U of Memphis, building scholarships, and creating a financial incentive for students who are on track to graduate in 4 years – possibly some type of rebate towards their last year of tuition. These are only ideas at this point, fodder for discussion. [Editorial note: For those of you who were at the interviews for the Student Success position, you will remember that Dr. Sluder reported that 2-3% retention in a year was considered an excellent increase. Seems MTSU has already exceeded expectations.]

(3) Other presentations at the meeting were by Ed Arning on Blue Print Solutions, Faye Johnson on SACS, and Dianna Rust on QEP. These individuals had already reported their information to the Chairs at our last meeting.

- Rebecca Smith (Social Work)