**Chairs Council**

**3:00PM on October 17, 2016**

**BAS S326**

**Minutes**

* Chairs Report
  + Includes summary of Deans Cabinet (10/5) meeting and meeting with the Provost (10/10)
* Old Business
  + Approval of the minutes from the September meeting (separate email attachment and on web page)
    - The September minutes were amended to include a statement that feedback had been requested from the Faculty Senate and Student Government on the A– issue. With that change, the minutes were unanimously approved.
  + Subcommittee Summaries
    - Chairs Handbook—Committee is aiming for completion by the end of the academic year. There are 10-12 theme areas, and the committee is dividing the labor among those areas. Steve Morris listed the areas and indicated he would share those later with the group. He also asked for assistance and input from the chairs and the other committees in preparing the handbook.
    - Waiting List—The committee’s target date for implementation is ASAP, hoping for a pilot for summer 2017. Committee still needs to survey advising managers to make sure this is definitely a priority over DegreeWorks. All advisors consulted so far are in favor of prioritizing wait list over DegreeWorks. The committee plans to draft a letter to take to the provost before the next meeting to make a formal request. Tyler Henson (Scheduling Center) was also consulted, and he did not have strong feelings either way; Rick Sluder (Student Success) has expressed support for the implementation of the wait list. Henson pointed out that several logistical decisions will need to be made and several groups will have to weigh in. It was noted that other institutions already have solutions in place and we could use those as a starting point.
    - Faculty Retention—(Also Salary inequities) The committee wants to develop a proposal for recommendations for those who are meritorious but paid at the low end for their rank/area.
    - Recruitment—The Recruitment Committee hopes to share a complete slate of recommendations in the next month or so. So far, they have identified a few areas of concern related to the recruitment timeline and plan for TT and FTTs. Particular obstacles include the number of qualified candidates that can be found for FTT positions and the lack of budgetary support for searches, especially FTT’s.
    - Faculty Evaluations and Mentoring—The committee hopes to prepare a page/section of “best practices” for inclusion in the Chairs Handbook by the end of the year. The committee is planning to research the knowledge that has been generated and published by others concerning teaching evaluations, how to assess research productivity, etc.
    - Workloads—The committee already met with Becky Cole, and Becky provided background on how workload information is used and why it is important. The committee expressed concern over the length and complexity of the form, and Becky said she will try to work on simplifying. She is trying to improve the form and may make it simpler to complete online.
* New Business
  + - None
* Future plans: Will discuss Promotion & Tenure policies at November meeting in order to give feedback to Provost Byrnes.
* 3:30PM – President McPhee
  + Summary of the selection of the MTSU Board

The MTSU Board has been appointed. Gov. Haslem called last Monday to inform McPhee about his selections. He used 3 factors in his nominations: (1) passion for the university, (2) understanding of the governing board in oversight of policy-making rather than in operations, and (3) capacity to support financially and encourage others to provide support. The legislature will have to confirm the appointments. McPhee expressed his delight with all of the governor’s choices. Each member nominated has been involved and engaged with the university; McPhee knows 7 of the 8 well. Six are graduates of MTSU.

At the outset, the board members will have three different term durations: 3-year term, 4-year term, 6-year term. Going forward, the standard term will be 6 years.

President McPhee listed the appointees and gave some basic information on each.

The BOT will have three primary responsibilities: (1) Budget, (2) Tuition & Fees (subject to range specified by THEC), and (3) Hiring the President.

Questions from the Chairs Council:

Q. Timeline for BOT?

A. Names & bios of trustees have been submitted to SACS; Detailed information is available on the MTSU front page. Confirmation is expected to occur in January or February. In the meantime, the university is asked to resist the urge to begin working too far forward with new BOT members until the legislature has opportunity to confirm them. The new members will go through required training by THEC, and then MTSU will conduct an orientation. The first MTSU Board Meeting will be scheduled for April, 2017.

Q. Will they also approve new degree programs?

A. Board will also approve new degree programs—no further need to deal with TBR, though TBR will undoubtedly try to continue to wield some influence in this area.

Q. What about their inexperience with academia?

A. President said this is not so bad because some of them have some experience, especially in engagement with MTSU, but also their role will be somewhat limited.

Q. Faculty representative?

A. Yes, Tony Johnston of Agribusiness/Agriscience will serve as the faculty representative on the board.

Q. Will they have a staff?

A. Yes, but MTSU will not hire additional people for the board. The primary need is for a Secretary to the Board. The person should be a legal secretary because the board will have fiduciary responsibility. Heidi Zimmerman will take on this role with some help from Kim Edgar. Space will be renovated in Cope for a BOT office.

Q. Meeting frequency?

A. Quarterly, and meetings will be streamed online. Chairman of the Board will be elected at the first meeting.

* + Open dialogue of items concerning Chairs and the university
    - Faculty Retention

The point was made that compensation needs to be addressed because of certain faculty leaving the university. Suggestions were made that a task force should be empaneled to look at the possibilities for finding creative solutions.

Dr. McPhee pointed out that revenue is declining due to enrollment decreases over time. MTSU cannot easily increase salaries when money is so short.

An observation was made that state legislature does not appear to be in our corner. It was stated that the faculty [at MTSU and elsewhere across the state] need to be more active and visible, for example, when there are meetings of the TN Senate Education Committee.

The president ultimately expressed support for the establishment of a task force to examine possibilities. This is NOT a new problem, and is not a surprise given the lack of financial support coming from the state, and he reminded us that there are limited resources to work with at the moment.

* + - Strategic ways that faculty and departments can help recruit, attain, and graduate students

Q. One chair pointed out that faculty need to be an integral part of student retention since students’ primary interactions are with faculty (not advisors).

A. It is imperative that department faculty and advisors maintain a good rapport and open lines of communication. Several chairs seemed to indicate that these interactions were satisfactory in their departments, whereas others did not.

Q. How can we improve engagement with high schools/students in Rutherford Co.? (Library, for example, is involved with Central Magnet, but other schools seem reluctant to engage).

A. Dr. McPhee talked about strong engagement with high schools for recruiting through True Blue Tours, Preview Day, BCA, CMS, etc. Certain departments were mentioned as strong examples. Question about how other departments would best get engaged directly with such efforts. Dr. McPhee mentioned that the deans put forth the recruitment plans, and chairs interested in getting more involved should consult their deans.

Q. Graduate recruiting: what resources are available to assist in recruiting, such as access to databases?

A. We will need to Get info from new VPR hire on what resources we might access.

Q. Geosciences asked if UG research summer programs are a possibility? Such programs would keep students on campus in summer to make progress toward graduation. Could the university provide incentives for students to engage in summer research (such as discounted tuition)?

A. This sounds like a good idea, and needs to be looked at.

Q. Who is our liaison at the C.C.’s?

A. It is a person in Deb Sells’ office: Linda Olsen. (We have 52% of our enrollment from transfer students).