

Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Committee Meeting
November 19, 2020
Tennessee State University – Electronic
MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Trustees Pam Martin, Andre Johnson, Ali Sekmen, and Non-voting Member: Tiara Thomas.

Other Board Members Present: Trustees Steve Corbeil, Obie McKenzie, Deborah Cole, Richard Lewis; Joseph Walker III

University Staff Present: President Glenda Glover; Laurence Pendleton, General Counsel and Board Secretary; Dr. Michael Harris, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Dr. Curtis Johnson, Chief of Staff; Dean Frank Stevenson, Assoc. Vice President of Student Affairs; Horace Chase, Vice President of Business and Finance; Dr. Frances Williams, Assoc. Vice President of Research & Sponsored Programs; Terrence Izzard, Assoc. Vice President of Enrollment Management; Dr. Robbie Melton, Graduate School Dean and Assoc. Vice President and Dr. Arlene Nicholas-Phillips, Liaison to the Board of Trustees.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Trustee Martin called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. on November 19, 2020. Trustee Martin moved to make certain findings on the record regarding the necessity for conducting the meeting electronically without a physical quorum present due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Committee is set to take up important matters. Participation by electronic means is necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying guidance from the Center for Disease Control (“CDC”) and the State of Tennessee to limit face-to-face contact whenever possible. Electronic participation for the Committee meeting is necessary for the safety of Board members, staff, and guests.

II. ROLL CALL/DECLARATION OF A QUORUM

Board Secretary Pendleton called the roll at the committee chair’s request. Trustees Pam Martin, Andre Johnson, Ali Sekmen, and Tiara Thomas were present. Secretary Pendleton announced the presence of a quorum.

Trustee Lewis asked the committee members to state now if any of the committee members cannot hear or speak with each other. No committee members answered in the affirmative. Trustee Lewis also asked the committee members to indicate if someone is present with them from the location in which they are calling. No committee members indicated there was anyone present.

III. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 24, 2020, COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Trustee Martin proceeded to the approval of the September 24, 2020, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Committee meeting minutes.

Trustee Martin moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of the September 24, 2020, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Committee meeting minutes, as contained in the Board materials for the November 19, 2020, Board meeting. Trustee Sekmen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously by roll call.

IV. REPORT ON COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ACADEMIC AND STUDENT ISSUES

Trustee Martin announced the next item on the agenda is the report on COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic and student issues. This is an informational item and no vote is required. Trustee Martin asked President Glover or her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item. The material is included in the November 19, 2020, Board Meeting materials.

President Glover asked Provost Harris to respond to this agenda item. Provost Harris shared with the committee that due to the pandemic, the University continues to move successfully within the virtual space and has a calendar of events set for the Spring 2021 semester. He noted that during the Fall 2020 semester, the University conducted several events with major success including the Annual Veteran's Day program and a Town Hall meeting with students. He stated that the Pass/Fail option was again offered to students and that everyone was continuing to grow and learn as we all progressed through this virtual space. Provost Harris shared that the students indicated that they wanted Zoom contact and that measures were in place as the value of everyone's health was being taken into consideration. The University was also aware of the level of stress and fatigued being experienced by students, faculty and staff as we all worked together to ensure the success of our students.

President Glover added that she was very happy that the Fall 2020 semester was coming to a successful end. When the students left for Thanksgiving it would mark the end of the semester.

Trustee Sekmen stated that even though many faculty, staff and students were not current coming into his building, the date and time for the sanitizing services were clearly marked. This gave him a sense of comfort knowing that the cleaning and sanitizing processes were in place.

Trustee Corbeil asked about statistics regarding COVID cases on campus and Dr. Curtis Johnson, Chief of Staff shared that there were 125 cases diagnosed and 53 represented faculty and staff. Currently 11 persons were being held in Isolation Quarantine. Dean Frank Stevenson shared that we had 1800 students on campus and the general population was being tested weekly. This averaged to approximately 75 students being tested daily. A short discussion on the testing practices ensued. Trustee Corbeil commended the University for doing a great job in controlling active cases among students.

Trustee Martin thanked President Glover, Provost Harris and all others for all that was done regarding this agenda item and commended them for keeping everyone safe.

**V. APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM MODIFICATION –
DISCONTINUANCE OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE
COMPLETION IN DENTAL HYGIENE**

Trustee Martin introduced the next item on the agenda as the approval of the academic program modification – discontinuance of Bachelor of Science degree completion in dental hygiene. She asked President Glover or her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item. The material is included in the November 19, 2020, Board Meeting materials.

President Glover asked Provost Harris to present on this item. Provost Harris explained that the University, with the support of the College of Health Sciences, requested approval to proceed with discontinuing/inactivating its Bachelor of Science Degree Completion in Dental Hygiene. He said that pursuant to TSU's Academic Programs, Units and Modifications process, which includes revised programs, academic departments may seek the discontinuance/inactivation of an academic program by initiating an internal review process. The department initiates the review process by developing and proposing the new/revised academic program for review at the departmental committee, college, and University levels. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President must ultimately approve the submissions.

Pursuant to the FOCUS Act, the Board's Bylaws, and the Board's Delegation of Authority to the President Policy, the Board must approve the discontinuance/inactivation of academic programs. Upon approval by the Board, THEC must provide final approval.

Provost Harris stated that the decision to inactivate this program comes with the following teach-out plan to assure successful matriculation for the three (3) remaining students. The Department of Dental Hygiene has identified two core elective courses within the College of Health Sciences that students can choose from to fulfill their degree requirement for spring 2021 graduation. He added that they intend to provide an online alternative which will be directed to students who graduated with an Associate degree, who are working and wanted to pursue their Bachelor degree while working. He commented that currently the Associate degree program was very robust.

Trustee Martin moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of an academic program modification – discontinuance of Bachelor of Science degree completion in dental hygiene, as contained in the Board materials for the November 19, 2020, board meeting. Trustee Sekmen seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

VI. APPROVAL OF TITLE IX EMERGENCY RULE

Trustee Martin announced the next agenda item as the approval of the Title IX Emergency Rule. She asked President Glover or her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item. The material is included in the November 19, 2020, Board Meeting packet.

President Glover asked Dean Stevenson to comment on this agenda item. Dean Stevenson explained that this was regarded as a house keeping item and it was in keeping with the best practices of the other LGIs.

Dean Stevenson noted that a detailed outline of the Emergency Rule filing form and the Rule Compliance are included on pages 125 through pages 137 in the Board materials for the November 19, 2020 board meeting. Attorney Pendleton added that the Office of Equity and Inclusion would be the area charged with implementing the regulations outlined in Title IX and that the Title IX Coordinator for the University his housed in the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

Seeing no further discussion was needed, Trustee Martin moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of the Title IX Emergency Rule, as contained in the Board materials for the November 19, 2020, board meeting, and to grant the President the authority to make any appropriate technical or required legal changes to the rule, including changes required through the state approval process. Trustee Sekmen seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

VII. REPORT ON SACSCOC ACCREDITATION REVIEW MATTERS

Trustee Martin introduced the next item on the agenda as the report on SACSCOC accreditation review matters. Trustee Martin asked President Glover or her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda items, as contained in the Board materials for the November 19, 2020, Board Meeting.

President Glover called on Provost Harris to announce the updates relating to this agenda item. Provost Harris was very excited to share with the committee that immediately following the last Board Meeting on September 24, 2020, the University submitted the Compliance Certification Report (CCR) on September 25, 2020. Proudly, this was ahead of the designated deadline.

Provost Harris specifically outlined the timeline pertaining to the upcoming On-Site Reaffirmation Committee visit and the time-frame for responding to any recommendations. He referenced the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) and also stipulated that by December, 2021, we should receive the SACSCOC Board of Trustees Reaffirmation decision. Provost Harris also mentioned the new software, NUVITIVE that was being used to track outcomes and strategic planning.

Trustee Sekmen added that working on these accreditations for SACSCOC has brought everyone closer together, working together. He admired the result of this collaboration and suggested that even after this process, everyone should continue to work closely together as they had been. He took this opportunity to also praise the Intensive English Center at TSU for the impending CCA accreditation. The only HBCU to have such an accreditation. A major accomplishment in such a short time. He also stated that he believes this could help our enrollment.

Following a brief discussion, President Glover then praised the efforts of everyone: faculty, staff and the leadership of Provost Harris. Trustee Cole warned against being too eager in stating that “this could never happen again”. Provost Harris pointed out that we were being “cautiously optimistic” in our approach.

Trustee Martin then thanked President Glover and Provost Harris for the report. She was then joined by all the other Trustees in applauding the efforts of everyone and commended the team on the fact that Silver and Associates were still being retained.

VIII. ACADEMIC AFFAIRS REPORT

Trustee Martin announced the next agenda item as the Academic Affairs Report. Information regarding this Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Committee agenda item is included in your board materials dated November 19, 2020. Trustee Martin asked President Glover and her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item.

President Glover asked Provost Harris to comment on this agenda item. Provost Harris detailed the outline found on pages 144 through 148 in the November 19, 2020 Board Meeting materials. He highlighted the opportunities and challenges regarding the strategic alignment. He pointed out the Title III received a 20% increase this year (\$1.8 mil). He mentioned the completion of the academic calendar, student partnerships, strategic plan implementation, faculty VESP and faculty development. He also thanked everyone again for all the hard work put in to achieving these goals.

Provost Harris then went on to briefly mention some of the other programs that were being considered. Regarding students, he promised that he will not tolerate faculty who are not being compassionate while maintaining high standards.

Trustee McKenzie asked about whether or not “Block Chain” was incorporated into our curriculum for our students. He felt that our students needed everything that would be needed to help them in the real world. Trustee Sekmen concurred. Provost Harris added some enlightenment on this topic. Trustee McKenzie again commented on adding programs such as “the digitalization of money” in an effort to stay ahead of the market and exposing our students to the moving trend. President Glover agreed and welcomed continuing the conversation on this topic.

Trustee Martin then thanked President Glover and Provost Harris for the report.

IX. STUDENT AFFAIRS REPORT

Trustee Martin introduced the next item on the agenda as a Student Affairs report. Trustee Martin asked President Glover or her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item. Information pertaining to this agenda item is included in the November 19, 2020 board materials.

President Glover asked Dean Frank Stevenson to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item. Since this was an informational discussion item, no vote was required. Dean Stevenson shared updates outlined on pages 151 and 152 in the Board materials for the November 19, 2020 Board meeting. Dean Stevenson reminded the committee that the Division of Student Affairs was like “front line workers for the university when it came to engaging with students and ensuring their success”. He said that his team worked on several areas to accomplish this including ensuring that the website was made clean and accessible to the students. He stated that a Standard Operating Procedure and Policies manual was put in place so as to maintain consistency as personnel changed in the Division of Academic Affairs. He promised that a copy will be placed in each department of the Academic Affairs division.

Dean Stevenson stated that the Division of Academic Affairs, in collaboration with the Department of Budget and Finance, along with the Office of Financial Aid all came together to develop guidelines for applying for “Hardship Dollars”. He stressed that several students met the requirements but were also impacted by the effects of COVID. They were able to distribute approximately \$500,000.00 Hardship Dollars.

Dean spoke about several successes with the students. He congratulated the Student Leadership and the 2nd runner-up placement of Ms. TSU, Ms. Moriah Rhodes, in a national HBCU pageant. He shared the success of the Voter Registration drive that was held, where over 200 students were registered for voting. Another hugely successful endeavor was the “Power to the Polls” initiative where the students were actively engaged in going to the polls and assisting others in getting there for our recent Presidential Elections. Several of the students who participated were freshmen and first-time voters.

Dean Stevenson stressed they were continuing to take the temperature of students and paying close attention to the added mental stress placed on students during this time. Particular attention was placed on the students being held in the IQ Zone (Isolation & Quarantine zone). They were working closely with counsellors and members of the student health services center in recognizing National Suicide Prevention and Depression. Student Tele-health services were also instituted for the engagement of our students. Dean thanked everyone who came together in assisting in keeping our students safe and comfortable during this time of COVID-19, including security, meals, having isolation rooms made move-in ready.

Trustee Martin commended Dean Stevenson and his team for everything that was done for our students.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Martin asked if there was any additional business. Seeing none, she moved to adjourn the meeting, and the motion was seconded by Trustee Sekmen which carried unanimously by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 am.