

**Meeting of the Tennessee State University Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Committee Meeting
March 11, 2021
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, Van Pinnock and 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 March 11, 2021. She took a moment to welcome the newest member of the Board, Trustee Van Pinnock. Trustee Martin then 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.

III. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 19, 2020, COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Trustee Martin proceeded to the approval of the November 19, 2020, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Committee meeting minutes.

Trustee Martin moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of the November 19, 2020 Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Committee meeting minutes, as contained in the Board materials for the March 11, 2020, Board meeting. Trustee Sekmen seconded the motion, which carried unanimously by roll call vote.

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 only 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 March 11, 2021, Board Meeting materials. President Glover asked Provost Harris to respond to this agenda item. Provost Harris reminded the committee that due to the pandemic, the University continues for a second semester, to move successfully within the virtual space. He stressed the main concerns were health and wellness of the campus community and academic success and retention of our students. Provost Harris stated that 83% of all courses were being delivered virtually, while the many others were in a hybrid format. The courses needing to conduct clinicals with students, were being delivered on ground. He stated that the administration worked closely with the student leadership to ensure that they got what was needed for success. He also mentioned the success of both August 2020 and December 2020 virtual commencement exercises, and planned for May 1, 2021 to be just as successful. Provost Harris concluded by priding Tennessee State University as a national leader regarding the handling of the COVID-19 crisis on campus.

Trustee Martin thanked President Glover and Provost Harris for all that was done regarding the wellbeing of the students and keeping everyone on campus safe.

V. APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM MODIFICATION – TERMINATION OF DESIGN CONCENTRATION IN THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN FAMILY CONSUMER SCIENCE PROGRAM

Trustee Martin introduced the next item on the agenda as the approval of the academic program modification – termination of design concentration in the Bachelor of Science in Family Consumer Science program. She asked President Glover or her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item. The material is included in the March 11, 2021, Board Meeting materials.

President Glover asked Provost Harris to present on this item. Provost Harris explained that this program was once in the College of Agriculture and in 2017 was moved to the Department of Art when that department was renamed as the Department of Art and Design. At that time the students in the program were given the option of graduating from either College. The last two students in this program have now graduated and so the University has chosen to cancel this concentration and only house it in the Department of Art and Design.

Trustee Martin moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of an academic program modification – termination of design concentration in the Bachelor of Science in Family Consumer Science program, as contained in the Board materials for the March 11, 2021, board meeting. Trustee Sekmen seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

VI. APPROVAL OF ACADEMIC PROGRAM MODIFICATION – TERMINATION OF SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY CONCENTRATION IN THE PH.D. IN PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM

Trustee Martin introduced the next item on the agenda as the approval of the academic program modification – termination of school of psychology concentration in the Ph.D. in psychology program. She asked President Glover or her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item and noted that the materials for this agenda item are included in the March 11, 2021, Board Meeting materials.

President Glover again asked Provost Harris to present on this agenda item. Provost Harris shared that enrollment in this concentration remains very low and makes us ineligible for accreditation. Hence, terminating this concentration will help us to remain efficient and effective to the needs of our students, and will allow us to strength the program.

Trustee Martin then moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of the academic program modification – termination of school of psychology concentration in the Ph.D. in psychology program, as contained in the Board materials for the March 11, 2021, board meeting. Trustee Sekmen seconded and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote.

VII. APPROVAL OF NEW DEGREE PROGRAM – M.S. IN DATA SCIENCE

Trustee Martin announced the next agenda item as the approval of the new degree program – M.S. in Data Science. She asked President Glover or her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item. The material is included in the March 11, 2021, Board Meeting packet.

President Glover asked Provost Harris to also comment on this agenda item. Provost Harris stated that he was delighted to present this item and believed that this new program would be an area of growth for the university. He confirmed that all the processes for implementing this new program had been completed and strongly believed this was a program of the future.

Trustee Martin then moved to recommend to the full Board the approval of a new academic program – M.S. in Data Science, as contained in the Board materials for the March 11, 2021, board meeting. Trustee Sekmen happily seconded and added a few comments on the importance of this new program and the role it will play for the university. He added that it brings together 19 faculty from several departments, namely: computer science, mathematics, physics, biology, electrical engineering, business administration and agricultural environmental sciences. He stated that the quality of this fully online program will be very high and will compete with Georgia Tech. The program, as Trustee Sekmen pointed out, will not be taught solely by TSU faculty, but will engage members of the industry and from our industrial partners such as HCA, IBM and Google. As an example, Trustee Sekmen stated that the Data Visualizations course would be taught by a faculty from Google. Trustee Martin thanked Trustee Sekmen and praised him for his involvement. She stated that with President Glover, Provost Harris and other faculty being

involved in this new program, that it would surely be a first class program and that she was very excited.

Trustee Thomas added her excited and praised the administration for this collaborative effort.

Trustee McKenzie wanted to be sure that there would be outside participation in exposing our students to real-world implications of the information brought forward by this program.

Trustee Martin thanked everyone. Seeing no more comments, she then instructed Secretary Pendleton to call the roll and the motion carried unanimously by the roll call vote.

VIII. 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 item, as contained in the Board materials for the March 11, 2021, Board Meeting. This is an informational discussion item only so no vote will be required.

President Glover called on Provost Harris to announce the updates relating to this agenda item. Provost Harris was very excited to share that SACSCOC accreditation was now here, and that TSU was ready. The Compliance Certification Report (CCR) was completed. He reminded the committee that in July 2020, the accreditation consultant, Dr. Silver announced that out of 73 principle of accreditation standards, we were non-compliant in 44 of them. Provost Harris then proudly stated that everyone came together, worked long hours into the night, for several nights, and with the assistance of the consultant and the university leadership, was able to submit our CCR report before the due date. The external committee later confirmed that out of 73 standards, we were non-compliant in 14. As a point of reference, Provost Harris explained that when universities present their report, usually 15 to 20 standards are returned showing non-compliance.

We followed up with a Focus Report where the 14 standards were addressed. Silver and Associates again guided us and we all feel very confident in the responses submitted. On February 25, and with the advisement of Silver and Associates, we held a mock SACSCOC visit. The mock session went very well and everyone was very confident that the actual visit in March will be just as successful. Provost Harris wanted to make it known that this accomplishment was the result of a lot of work by a lot of people coming together and working together. One area that is still being completed is standard #13 – audit. This one area we are expecting to receive a deficiency rating since it will not be completed in time so as to be included in this report to SACSCOC before the March visit. Once completed, we will have five months (150 days) to turn this in to SACSCOC. Provost Harris stated that he and others were working with the auditors on a daily basis and making considerable progress.

Provost Harris added information pertaining to the Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), standard #7.2, which focuses on student learning and/or student success. The university's QEP is entitled CADENCE which represents 7 keys steps: Connect, Assess, Develop, Engage, Navigate, Create

and Excel. This QEP will change the advising process for our students. It is a 5-year plan that will be implemented. He stated that we were very confident in these enhancements.

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

IX. 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 March 11, 2021. Trustee Martin asked President Glover and her designee to provide pertinent information related to this agenda item. This is an informational discussion item only so no vote will be required.

President Glover asked Provost Harris to comment on this agenda item. Provost Harris detailed the outline found on pages #109 through #114 in the March 11, 2021, Board Meeting materials. He gave highlights of Fall 2020 and Spring 2021. He shared some of the academic program planning as it related to COVID-19, enrollment, and growth opportunities for the university. Provost Harris also identified and reviewed some of the plans from service units in the Academic Affairs Division. The financial aid and academic success center had experienced operational changes. The Office of the Provost created the Administrative Staff Forum whereby feedback could be garnered directly from front line and end user employees, all in an attempt to identify ways of improvement and training needs.

Provost Harris then went on to briefly mention the implementation of the strategic plan “The Pathway to Excellence 2025” and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff.

Trustee McKenzie emphasized the necessity to include video or digital resources in our teaching techniques/ modalities across the board. He pointed out that in the post-COVID world we should build a bridge with students and professionals in the various fields. Identify TSU graduates in a particular position/job and engage our students in a ‘fireside chat’ with these professionals.

Trustee Martin agreed that this type of learning should be adopted at TSU and reached out to Provost Harris and President Glover. Trustee Thomas added that mentorship was critical for the students at TSU. It gives them an opportunity to see people who look like them in reputable positions. She also suggested that building relationships and networking with the alumni was a great idea.

Trustee Martin then thanked President Glover and Provost Harris for the report. She also thanked Trustee McKenzie and Trustee Thomas for their input.

X. 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 March 11, 2021, 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 which are outlined on pages #117 and #118 in the Board materials for the March 11, 2021 Board meeting. Dean Stevenson shared with the committee that the Tennessee State University Police Department (TSUPD) was now organizationally located within the Division of Student Affairs. He stated that among the various benefits of having the TSUPD in the Division, was having the opportunity to show the students an example of what good policing looks like, or good community policing. He added that the TSUPD officers on campus are involved and intentional about relationships with students, and that he thought that this was a great model.

Dean Stevenson mentioned the fact that some students work with the police department in securing the campus as a member of Tiger Patrol. He prided the presence of the officers, whether on bike patrol or in patrol vehicles with more computers, for the increased visibility and the reduction of campus crime. A 2018-2019 survey of Freshman students revealed that 85% stated they felt safe on campus. He also shared that the Dignitary Protection Unit provides for added security for our high profile guests and speakers on campus; while the Rape Aggression Defense (RAD) Program provides self-defense training in emergency situations. These were just a few of the reasons why TSU was ranked in the top 5 schools across the country where students felt safest on campus.

Everyone congratulated Chief Gregory Robinson for being selected as the 2019 IACLEA International Administrator of the Year and was also selected as the 2020 SE Region Chief/Director of the Year.

Regarding COVID-19 on campus, Dean shared that currently there were 25 students in the Isolation/Quarantined (IQ) Zone and stated that this was a very manageable number. Recently, there was a unit on campus that experienced a high number, and that unit was isolated and shut down for 14 days. Over the last 10 days, those numbers fell dramatically. On another note, Dean Stevenson shared that students were presently campaigning for Student Leadership positions and were very excited. He then thanked President Glover and others for the increased opportunities for student engagement.

Dean mentioned that a final decision had not been made on whether Commencement will be virtual, in person or in some form of a hybrid format. To that Trustee Thomas expressed her excitement of the possibility of an in-person Commencement and again complimented the administration for listening to the students. She took this opportunity to remind the committee about the proposed TSU Time Capsule project which may be buried for 15, 20 or 25 years with several artifacts.

Trustee Martin commented that although everyone was excited about the possibility of an in-person Commencement, and walking across the stage, that Dr. Glover and the administration

were very concerned about the safety of the students. This decision has everyone very torn but still everyone is still trying to work out a way to make it happen for the students.

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 Johnson which carried unanimously by roll call vote. The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 am.