

Tennessee State University
Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes
November 21, 2024

Present: AVP Erik Schmeller, Ms. Gloria Sanders, Senator Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi, Senator Reginald Archer, Senator Carlos Beane, Senator Guinevere Bennett, Senator Kenneth Chilton, Senator Jason de Koff, Senator Poliala Dickson, Senator Cynthia Gadsden, Senator Sagnika Ghosh, Senator Sujata Guha, Dr. Jemal Gishe, Dr. Retta Guy, Senator Mohammad Habibi, Senator Beatrice Harris, Senator Julie Huskey, Senator Bill Johnson, Senator Natasha Johnson, Senator Joel Jolayemi, Senator George Kakoti, Senator Reynard McMillian, Senator Megan O'Neil, Senator Nsoki Phambu, Senator Sean Posey, Senator Ljerka Rasmussen, Senator Twianie Roberts, Senator Brian Russell, Senator Miranda Sanford-Terry, Senator Alex Sekwat, Senator Hongwei Si, Senator Karen Smith, Senator Martene Stanberry, Senator Zufen Wang, Dr. Tokesha Warner

Meeting started at 2:40 PM

AGENDA:

Welcome & Call to Order · Approval of September 19 and October 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Senator Tiriveedhi addressed the Faculty Senate and shared the meeting agenda. The meeting was called to order at 2:45 PM. The minutes for both September 19 and October 17, 2024, were approved.

Office of Institutional Advancement · Gloria Sanders, Director of Estate Management and Major Gifts

The invited speaker was Ms. Gloria Sanders, Senior Director of Estate Management and Major Gifts. Ms. Sanders is new to TSU and wants to engage faculty, staff, and alumni about making the best financial choices for themselves and their families. Ms. Sanders shared the legacy of TSU and asked the faculty to think about a plan to take care of their family and the university. Everyone should have a will, and it should be updated. We leave a legacy behind for our family. Our investment will make a difference for our students and their families. The Office of Institutional Advancement is located on the 3rd floor of the Floyd-Payne Campus Center, Suite 310. Service is free for the faculty.

Concerns on Senate Committee Membership · Senator Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi, Senate Chair; Parliamentarian, Senator Archer

On November 20, 2004, Senator Tiriveedhi had a one-hour meeting with President Tucker, Mr. Thomson (special advisor to the President), and others, and conveyed to the Faculty Senate information he had received.

There will be no faculty job losses or filing for financial exigency. Rumors and inaccurate statements are floating about TSU's financial situation.

As of November 20, 2024, there is \$32.4 million in TSU's account. TSU requires about \$44 million for payroll and regular operating costs. Of that amount, \$32.4 million is from liquid account, \$7.3 million is what the Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission (SACM) has owed since 2017, and \$3.4 million is from endowment and funds raised. Currently, TSU is reasonably financially stable. There are no reserve funds. The current administration has inherited a \$14 million bill that TSU has to pay, which is being negotiated.

There are also inaccurate statements and assumptions being made about selling the Avon Williams Campus (AWC) and incubator. The College of Business, College of Public Service, etc. have operations at AWC and the campus is fully functional. Private partnership brands can be developed to bring additional revenue to TSU.

\$544 million has been agreed upon by the legislature and approved by the General Assembly and the Governor. Of that amount, if \$294 million can be unrestricted funds, it can really help TSU. The \$800,000 contract to Dr. Glenda Glover is a complex agreement and has nothing to do with faculty jobs or the \$544 million.

We won't get APIP money. A hiring freeze will be in place until June 2025.

Senator O'Neil asked if 50% of the operating budget goes toward instruction and how it is defined. 70% is payroll operating cost which has a formula based on graduation of seniors. Senator Tiriveedhi stated that he is not clear about it.

Senator de Koff asked if we will be getting research enhancement awards. Senator Tiriveedhi stated that the official word is still "under consideration."

Senator Natasha Johnson mentioned that there was a tenure-track faculty discussion about restrictions related to travel or hindrance for research capacity. AVP Schmeller stated that it is not known how long the restrictions will last. Department chairs should document challenges faced by the faculty in moving forward.

Senator Rasmussen asked about faculty changes in status and converting temporary full-time positions to adjunct positions. Senator Tiriveedhi answered that adjunct faculty are contract-based and are hired as needed. Non-tenure track positions could be affected. However, there will be no job losses for tenure-track and tenured faculty.

Senator Tiriveedhi met with the chairs of the standing committees on October 31 and November 1, 2024, to discuss whether new committees can be formed. The college deans will fill in 14 standing

committees and 3 ad hoc committees by April 2025. The deans should also send in a list of new senators, if any.

Committee Reports · Senator Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi, Senate Chair

Senator McMillian (Financial Aid Committee) – there has been a concern about staffing to create financial statements about the institution. The Financial Aid Committee is working on it.

Senator Roberts (Curriculum Committee) – the committee met on November 14, 2024, and adjusted/updated curriculum issues. They worked on everything that was in queue.

Senator Dickson (Alumni Committee) – the committee will meet at the beginning of the Spring semester.

Senator Bill Johnson (Constitution Committee) – the committee will meet after the break in January, 2025.

Senator Sanford-Terry (Grievance Committee) – there were no updates. The committee met and determined that policies have not been violated by a faculty member against whom a grievance was filed.

Senator Chilton (Professional Development) – there was nothing new to report. The committee is thinking about some type of TSU podcast. Senator Chilton will write the first draft and share it with the committee.

Senator Phambu (Research Committee) – the committee is doing a survey asking people from different departments and colleges to provide input about the research committee. An update will be provided in January, 2025. Senator Tiriveedhi asked Senator Phambu to contact Research and Sponsored Programs about the research enhancement award.

Senator Russell (Student Appeals Committee) – there were no updates.

Senator Tiriveedhi mentioned that, if needed, an emergency meeting of the committee chairs may be called before January 30, 2025, in case of any specific development or issue.

Provost Melton's Updates and Reminders

Spring enrollment is 4875, while the projected is 5000.

Department advisors should update Degree Works, CPoS, and promote early registration for Spring 2025. Giving early final exams is a department/college policy. Students should not be

sent to Academic Affairs. Final grades are due on December 12, 2024. Faculty Institute is on January 6, 2025.

Adjunct faculty hire in Spring 2025 may require a justification, if enrollment does not increase.

Other Concerns · Senator Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi, Senate Chair

Some students did not receive financial aid packages. AVP Schmeller mentioned that he will bring that up to Provost Melton.

Senator Chilton asked if there was a way for better communication between upper leadership and the faculty.

Senator Sanford-Terry put the following questions in chat that she had received from the faculty.

- For grants that include teaching buyout, has the RSP/Grants Accounting been billing the grants for this buyout time? This does not seem to be the case upon looking at the discrepancy between grant funds received and grant expenditures.
- Access to grant funds has major barriers.
- Status of RedCAP access for the university. This contract has been received by our university but has not been processed. Where is it? How can we get this executed?

Senator Tiriveedhi asked Senator Phambu to take note.

Closing Comments and Adjournment · Senator Venkataswarup Tiriveedhi, Senate Chair

The next Faculty Senate meeting will be held on January 30, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at 4:06 PM.

Minutes recorded by Senator Sujata Guha, Secretary