



Middle Tennessee State University

Student Government Association

sga@mtsu.edu

www.mtsu.edu/sga

June 02, 2023

Chairman Steve Smith
MTSU Board of Trustees
Cope Administration Building, CAB 211

Chairman Smith,

The MTSU Student Body was notified this week of the MTSU Board of Trustee's proposal to increase undergraduate in-state tuition and mandatory fees at its June 20, 2023 meeting. With an ever-increasing cumulative student debt, college affordability is an issue at the top of most students' mind. This issue has only been exacerbated by an economic climate characterized by rampant job loss, inflation and limited government relief. However, now more than ever, many students, especially students from low-income backgrounds, face unstable financial situations and deserve the ability to advance their studies without the barriers presented by our current economy.

We note that a large portion of this mandatory fee increase can be attributed to Athletics. This is a special concern to our students for at least two reasons. First, though you may not be aware, it has been a longstanding practice at MTSU that departments proposing an increase to a mandatory student fee first bring the proposal to the SGA Executive Board. Once a year SGA exec meets with the directors of departments requesting fee increases to discuss the need in detail. While it is not the role of SGA to approve or deny the request for additional funding, the process has provided a mechanism for student input into the process and creates a system of full transparency.

This year, although the Athletic department was contacted by the SGA president to ask if a fee increase request would be made, no request was brought to the SGA exec. Therefore, we are now in a position where the largest portion of the fee increase was the only increase NOT brought forward for discussion with the SGA executive board. As the president of SGA, I am very disappointed in this apparent lack of interest in student input, and gravely concerned that this signals a change in our decades-long collaboration with campus administration on issues that have significant impact on our student body.



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With that in mind, we submit the following recommendations to the Board of Trustees:

- That the Board of Trustees and campus administration re-commits to the standard practice of bringing fee increases forward once a year for discussion with the SGA executive board. While we acknowledge that the actual approval or denial of fee increases is beyond the scope of the SGA, we believe that open discussion of all mandatory fee increases is essential in building student trust in a transparent fee-setting process.
- Since the proposed increase in the athletic fee is the largest of the mandatory fee increases, we recommend consideration of phasing in the total increase of \$38 over a three year period, with an increase of \$12 for 2023-24, and additional \$12 in 2024-25, and the final \$14 in 2025-26.”.

We are leaning upon the Board of Trustees and Middle Tennessee State University administration to provide affordable education to students, especially post COVID-19 pandemic, where families are attempting to financially recover with full, consistent transparency concerning how tuition money is utilized. We hope the requests outlined in this letter are expeditiously addressed to create a more transparent, equitable, and affordable college education for all students.

True Blue!

Michai J. Mosby | President

Trinity Henderson | Vice President & Speaker of the Senate

Zoe Spikner | Communications Director

Caroline Spann | Election Commissioner

Nicolas Morgan | Attorney General

Delquan Dorsey Jr. | Events Director

Kelsey Ladd | Homecoming Director/Assistant Events Director

Riley Jacoby | Chief of Staff