

# Middle Tennessee State University Strategic Plan

## Leadership Committee

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June 17, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Zoom

### Meeting Minutes

#### Roll Call

Committee Members Present: Jeff Gibson, Layne Bryant, Danielle Rochelle, Lisa Green, Jennifer Vannatta-Hall, Sam Zaza, Trey Martindale

#### Review of June 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Chair Gibson asked members if there were any revisions to the June 3, 2024, leadership team meeting minutes. He requested that Bill Waits' title and full name be added to the discussion about campus planning.

#### Emergent Themes Discussion

Chair Gibson shared the Emergent Themes document and opened the floor for discussion after reading comments provided by committee members. He asked if changes to the fourth and seventh bullet points in the Emergent Themes to Address sections were acceptable to members. Chairs Green and Ridgley's recommendation for the fourth bullet point about communication should be split into two themes. Members noted the need for communication extends beyond Marketing and Communication. Chair Gibson recommended that the document be shared with a comment and a note regarding communication.

Chair Gibson asked whether members wanted to retain the mention of R2 specifically in the seventh bullet point. Chair Zaza and Co-Chair El Kadiri recommended removing the reference to the Carnegie classification, and no members disagreed.

#### Priorities and Strategies Discussion

Chair Gibson shared the Priorities and Strategies draft with member comments. Chair Vannatta-Hall reiterated the importance of highlighting MTSU's strength, history, and prioritization of teaching. Co-Chair El Kadiri offered her view that the first priority captures both research and teaching, even if teaching and creative activity are not explicitly named. Chair Gibson asked members to comment on the recommended revision to "increase the institutional creative and research profile and advance teaching excellence to remain a top choice for students." Chair Ridgley shared that the revision may be too long and wordy and recommended removing "and advance teaching excellence." Co-Chair El Kadiri also noted that the word 'remain' indicates we believe we are already a top choice for students, though we may not be. As a result, she recommended replacing 'remain' with 'be.' Chair Zaza noted that research must be a priority to remain relevant in the future. After the discussion,

Chair Gibson recommended changing the phrase to ‘increase the institutional creative and research profile and be a top choice for students.’

Co-Chair Martindale asked how the top three priorities were developed. Chair Gibson explained they emerged from the themes shared by pillars. Co-Chair Martindale offered his view that MTSU’s future is not to be a research institution. However, Chair Gibson reminded members that advancing the research profile has been mentioned in multiple feedback sessions, including from the president and board of trustees. Chair Green noted many stakeholders would likely be disappointed if research were not included in the next strategic plan. Chair Zaza reiterated that teaching alone will not be enough to have a societal impact and attract students.

Co-Chair El Kadiri noted that research is the primary focus of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. Chair Gibson also pointed out that some research indicates that the population of undergraduate students may be declining; therefore, we need to enhance our portfolio of graduate programs, which will focus on research. Co-Chair El Kadiri noted that the proposed revision specifically strives for something other than a specific Carnegie classification. Instead, it attempts to demonstrate the priority of research in the next ten years.

Co-Chair Martindale offered research concerning the difficulty institutions face when trying to be all things to everyone. He stated that using the phrase ‘increase research profile’ signals to stakeholders the Carnegie Classification. He also noted that R1 institutions often have large class sizes and more teaching assistants, given the focus on research. Chair Green noted voices who shared the need for more support for research in the listening sessions.

VP Hoffschwelle noted that increasing our profile needs to be in the plan to be supported and set the trajectory of the institution. Chair Gibson also stated that undergraduate research is a recognized high-impact practice at MTSU.

Members discussed the second and third priorities and initiatives, which were only slightly changed based on comments. He asked for specific feedback on the initiative to ‘establish a comprehensive recruiting strategy that targets multiple populations and articulates the multifaceted value of the MTSU educational experience.

Chair Green asked how involved the SPLP will be in plan implementation. Chair Gibson and VP Hoffschwelle reiterated implementation will be the responsibility of the planning committee. Our role is to ensure goals and strategies can be feasibly resourced and implemented only.

Chair Gibson asked if the current version adequately captures DEI concerns shared by the SGA president at the retreat. Chair El Kadiri and Co-Chair Rochelle said that several initiatives capture diversity.

Chair Vannatta Hall recommended changing PHD to Doctoral in the initiatives for the first priority. Co-Chair El Kadiri noted her view that the third priority is not phrased as effectively as the first two. Chair Gibson pointed out the language came from the engagement pillar at the retreat. Chair Zaza elaborated that using the word ‘integrated’ ensured all units were

involved. Co-Chair Rochelle recommended replacing 'integrated' with 'collaborative' in the priority; however, members agreed to use 'integrated' in the third initiative and remove the word from the priority title.

Chair Green requested that succession planning be explicitly included as an initiative and offered that the third initiative would be an appropriate place to include. Dr. Hoffschwelle noted another option would be to include it in the second initiative of the second priority. Chair Gibson pointed out that the second priority focuses on students. Chair Ridgley recommended the third priority. Chair Vannatta Hall suggested the phrase 'create robust onboarding and ongoing professional development programs and provide succession planning for all employees,' which members affirmed.

### **Campus Decision Maker Discussion**

Chair Gibson shared his intention to communicate a confidential version of the current drafts with the decision-makers members have identified. Our goal is to provide enough direction without boxing them in. He asked members to add constituencies who should be included in fall listening sessions.

### **Other Business**

SPLC will meet on July 8 and 22 to do a final touch base before the meetings with the Provost and President in late July.

Meeting adjourned at 2:19 p.m.