

Middle Tennessee State University Strategic Plan

Leadership Committee

July 22, 2024

1:00 p.m.

Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Roll Call

Members in attendance: Jeff Gibson, Mary Hoffschwelle, Layne Bryant, Lisa Green, Jennifer Vannatta-Hall, Robyn Ridgely, Ben Lynch, Joe Whitefield, Danielle Rochelle

Review of July 8, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Chair Gibson asked if there were any changes to the minutes. No changes were recommended, and members approved the minutes.

Context and Framework Document Review

Chair Gibson opened the floor for feedback on the context and framework documents, which incorporate all recommendations from Dr. Detweiller. Members did not have additional suggestions, and the changes were approved.

Research Initiative Discussion

Chair Gibson shared a summary of the meeting with Provost Byrnes. While he generally supported the framework, he suggested further revision may be necessary for the research initiative. Chair Gibson also noted Dr. Butler offered that the trend in graduate programs was toward non-thesis master's programs. He then asked Dr. Hoffschwelle and Co-Chair Bryant for their insights about their conversation regarding the research initiative. Dr. Hoffschwelle affirmed Chair Gibson's summary of the meeting with the Provost and shared that there are conversations regarding whether an initiative in the strategic plan should be aligned with the Carnegie R1 classification. She noted that Carnegie values only research doctorates; however, the institution's research agenda extends to non-research graduate programs and undergraduate research. She reminded participants that we heard many pleas to increase support of graduate student support in the new strategic plan. She recommended we use a more broad initiative.

Chair Green noted that this initiative emerged from the Innovation pillar in response to complaints that the institution must clearly communicate whether we should pursue R1. She said their committee emphasized that 'full support' was the priority rather than the specific Carnegie classification. Chair Gibson noted the framework suggests that the institution should dedicate more attention and resources to the kinds of activity that would lead us to R1 in the future should we determine we are ready.

Chair Gibson supported the recommendation to "fully support the development of new research-focused degree programs." He asked for feedback from attendees or

recommendations for alternatives. Chair Ridgley asked whether the initiative should be broader and include research other than degree programs. Co-Chair Whitefield pointed out that only identifying ‘new’ programs removes the focus on existing programs. He liked the use of ‘new and existing’ offered by VP Hoffschwelle. Chair Vannatta-Hall questioned whether it would be helpful to more narrowly focus the initiative to help direct resources, though she shared her concern that creative activity would be minimized. VP Hoffschwelle clarified that the Carnegie classifications include creative activity scholarship in the count of research degrees awarded. Chair Gibson suggested ‘fully support the development of new research/scholarship focused degree programs’, which was affirmed by attendees.

August Retreat Planning

Chair Gibson reminded participants that members discussed using a virtual format for the August full committee retreat. The recommended format was a meeting with the full committee, followed by breakout meetings for the pillar committees to discuss the framework, hear feedback from members, and collect their ideas for implementation. Chair Vannatta-Hall asked for clarification about the virtual format and shared that sometimes participants hesitate to engage virtually. Chair Gibson noted the virtual proposal was to enable more members to attend. Chair Ridgley agreed that the discussion would be more accessible in person and asked if the meeting would be a full or half day. Members noted the need for a structured agenda should the meeting occur virtually. Chair Vannatta-Hall recommended polling members to determine their preferences before finalizing the format and agenda. Chair Gibson will send a poll to members the week of July 22 and allow one week for responses. After the meeting with the President in late July, the Chair will share the most current version of the framework with the full committee to request their feedback.

Implementation Plan Draft Discussion

Chair Gibson shared the draft implementation plan and explained the goal of creating an annual implementation plan that follows a similar cycle as the institutional effectiveness process. The cycle would include a campus-wide forum each fall to report progress on prior year initiatives and the annual activity plans for the current year. He noted our goal to develop a valuable and helpful process. He also pointed members to the draft metrics and indicators. VP Hoffschwelle commented that the draft implementation plan will be beneficial because it connects responsible individuals to each strategy, which has been a challenging component of the institution’s current plans. Chair Green asked for clarity about the metrics Carnegie uses for the classification and recommended that research and development spending and the number of research doctorates be included as metrics.

Co-Chair Whitefield noted that the framework grid version includes the label ‘initiatives’ while the narrative version does not. Chair Gibson walked members through the metrics and indicators document to show which map to use for specific priorities, strategies, or initiatives. Co-Chair Rochelle asked whether ‘professional’ should be added to ‘academic internships’. Chair Gibson explained that the use of ‘academic’ was an attempt to map the metric to the measurement, which would be the number of enrollments in an internship course for academic credit. Co-Chair Rochelle noted some students approach the Career Center to obtain internships rather than enrolling in a course and suggested the Career Center might track such placements.

Fall Survey Planning

Chair Gibson noted the goal of deploying a survey in early fall to receive feedback from the broader campus community. He asked for volunteers who might want to work on the survey, and Chair Vannatta-Hall volunteered to help. Chair Gibson reminded the committee that we will have a new graduate student in the next academic year who can help us with survey analysis.

Fall Listening Session Planning

After the survey analysis, the committee will conduct another round of listening sessions in October. The goal will be to receive feedback on the framework, metrics and indicators, and action plans.

Other Business

The president's meeting will be on July 31, and the next leadership committee meeting will be on August 12. Chair Gibson asked members their preference for virtual vs. in-person, and the group decided to meet virtually again so that the meeting could be recorded.

Co-Chair Rochelle shared that there will be a new add-on to the My MT app called My MT Plus, which will be deployed this fall to facilitate communication between faculty, staff, and students.

Meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.