

4-23-2021 12:00 AM

2021-04-23

Board of Regents, Murray State University

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**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Regents
Murray State University
April 23, 2021**

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Murray State University Board of Regents and the Board of Regents Finance Committee met in Special Session on Friday, April 23, 2021, via video conferencing (ZOOM). Chair Jerry Rhoads called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. The roll was called and the following Board members were present: Eric Crigler, Robbie Fitch, Virginia Gray, Sharon Green, Warren Norman, Leon Owens, Jerry Rhoads, Lisa Rudolph, Phil Schooley, Melony Shemberger and Don Tharpe. Absent: none.

Others present were: Robert L (Bob) Jackson, President; Jill Hunt, Senior Executive Coordinator for the President, Coordinator for Board Relations and Secretary to the Board; Tim Todd, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Jackie Dudley, Vice President for Finance and Administrative Services and Treasurer to the Board; Don Robertson, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management; Robert Miller, General Counsel; David Looney, Executive Director of Auxiliary Services and Information Technology staff who were monitoring the technology component of the meeting. Digital Media Services also livestreamed the Special Meeting of the Board of Regents to provide access to the general public.

AGENDA

Call to Order

Chair Rhoads

Roll Call

Secretary Hunt

Swearing-In Ceremony – Dr. Robert “Robbie” Graham Fitch* Judge David Buckingham

Election of Vice Chair and Secretary*

Chair Rhoads

Committee Reports/Recommendations

A. Finance Committee

Regent Owens

- 1) **Authorization of 2021-22 Tuition and Mandatory Fee Rates***
- 2) **Approval of 2021-22 Housing Rates***
- 3) **Approval of 2021-22 Dining Rates***

Full Board Action Follows Committee Action.

Adjournment

(*Requires Board of Regents Action)

Swearing-In Ceremony – Dr. Robbie Fitch

Pursuant to Section 164.321 of Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS), Governor Andy Beshear, on April 9, 2021, appointed Robert Graham “Robbie” Fitch of Murray, Kentucky, to replace Dan Kemp who resigned as a member of the Murray State Board of Regents. Dr. Fitch’s term will end June 30, 2026. Judge David Buckingham administered the Kentucky Constitutional Oath of Office, pursuant to Section 228, to Regent Fitch. Dr. Fitch received virtual applause and was welcomed to the Murray State University Board of Regents.

Dr. Fitch stated he looks forward to meeting his fellow Board members in person and working with each of them during his tenure. All are to be commended for a successful academic year and being able to keep the University functioning. While many schools moved to an all virtual classes format, MSU has been able to keep students meeting in person during a pandemic. He appreciates being welcomed to the Board.

Vice Chair and Secretary, elected

Chair Rhoads stated that in accordance with the *Bylaws* of the Board of Regents, all officers are elected annually at the Spring Quarterly Meeting and shall serve for one year, commencing July 1 following their election. This was accomplished at the June 5, 2020, Quarterly Meeting through a separate election conducted for each of the officers: Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary. As per Kentucky Revised Statute 164.430, an election for Vice Chair and Secretary shall be held at the organizational meeting required within 30 days of the appointment of a new member.

Chair Rhoads declared that nominations were in order for Vice Chair of the Board of Regents and asked Secretary Hunt to call the roll. Mr. Crigler and Dr. Fitch passed. Mrs. Gray nominated Eric Crigler. All other members passed. Chair Rhoads declared that there being only one nomination for Vice Chair, Eric Crigler is unanimously elected, according to the *Bylaws* of the Murray State University Board of Regents. Vice Chair Crigler received virtual applause.

Chair Rhoads declared that nominations were in order for Secretary of the Board of Regents and asked Secretary Hunt to call the roll. Mr. Crigler nominated Jill Hunt. All other members passed. Chair Rhoads declared there being only one nomination for Secretary, Jill Hunt is unanimously elected, according to the *Bylaws* of the Murray State University Board of Regents. Secretary Hunt received virtual applause. Chair Rhoads reported this is a well-deserved honor and expressed appreciation to Secretary Hunt for all of her good work providing support to all Board members. She makes the Board's job easier and her hard work is sincerely appreciated.

Finance Committee

Leon Owens – Chair
Eric Crigler
Jerry Rhoads
Lisa Rudolph
Phil Schooley

Mr. Owens called the Finance Committee to order at 9:22 a.m. and reported all other members were present.

Authorization of 2021-22 Tuition and Mandatory Fee Rates, approved

Dr. Jackson reported that access and affordability are very important to Murray State and is an area the University has focused on over the last few years to keep tuition and mandatory fees, housing and dining rates low. Last year this Board voted, upon the recommendation of the administration, for a zero percent increase in tuition and mandatory fees and the year previous the increase was 1 percent. The Board is being asked today to approve up to a 1 percent increase for Fiscal Year 2021-22 tuition and mandatory fee rates, should it be deemed necessary. This includes undergraduate, graduate and doctoral tuition and mandatory fees.

Regent Owens stated that this past year has been very challenging but under the leadership of President Jackson and Vice President Dudley, Regents can be very proud of the fiscal responsibility and job that has been done to ensure that Murray State is not only competitive but also fiscally sound. Although this represented a team effort, the leadership provided by President Jackson and Vice President Dudley was critical for a successful outcome.

A graphical depiction of the tuition and mandatory fee rates of all Kentucky state universities was provided in the eBoard book. These rates do not reflect any increases in undergraduate and graduate rates. Every effort will be made to maintain no increase in tuition and mandatory fee rates but to provide greater flexibility to the administration, the Board is also being asked to approve up to a 1 percent increase in tuition and mandatory fee rates.

The Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE) establishes tuition rate parameters that universities must follow. A Special Meeting of the CPE will be called in mid-May to approve the 2021-22 tuition cap for the universities. This represents a one-year recommendation due to the General Assembly approving only a one-year (2021-22) budget for the Commonwealth. This action applies to all Kentucky research and comprehensive universities.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Regent Rudolph moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, approve up to a 1 percent increase in 2021-22 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral tuition and mandatory fee rates should it be determined by the administration to be in the best interest of the University. Regent Rhoads seconded and the motion carried.

Full Board Action – Authorization of 2021-22 Tuition and Mandatory Fee Rates, approved

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Regent Owens moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, approve up to a 1 percent increase in 2021-22 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral tuition and mandatory fee rates should it be determined by the administration to be in the best interest of the University. Regent Rudolph seconded.

Regent Shemberger asked what a 1 percent increase in tuition and mandatory fees amounts to and President Jackson reported it is approximately \$650,000 for every 1 percent increase. There are many deferred maintenance, asset preservation and renovation projects that must be undertaken. This includes renovations in the Curris Center which is vitally important to campus. Last year there was a zero percent increase in faculty and staff salaries and it is hoped a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) can be offered this year. On behalf of the faculty, Regent Shemberger indicated that all appreciate what President Jackson and his administrative team have done leading Murray State University during a pandemic over the past 14 difficult months. At a time of uncertainty when many postsecondary administrators across the nation had to turn to layoffs to keep their institutions afloat, Murray State's leaders did just the opposite and handled the situation better than some counterparts. She does not believe Murray State would have succeeded as well under any other administrators and appreciation was expressed to President Jackson, Provost Todd and Vice Presidents Robertson and Dudley for the diligence they demonstrated throughout the mounting pressures facing the University. In that sense, Murray State did the right thing.

Regent Shemberger noted that although a 1 percent increase may not seem like much to many individuals, when it is put in the context of tuition, the meaning is going to vary. This Board definitely recognizes the fiscal responsibility it and the administrators have to Murray State University. She wonders about the University's publics – prospective students, returning students and their families – because a 1 percent increase could be the difference between paying a semester's worth of education or school supplies or whether a portion of the rent is covered for the month, buying groceries for the week or taking care of a family member's medical needs. In the context of a graduate education, several faculty members across campus have reached out to her sharing recent instances of students applying to graduate programs but not enrolling. There are also current graduate students who are not returning. These students have instead selected other schools in Kentucky or elsewhere because the graduate tuition rates were cost prohibitive at Murray State. In graduate education particularly, Murray State is not just competing with other schools in Kentucky, Tennessee or in the areas defined for undergraduate programs, but the University is competing in graduate education against others across the nation because of the flexibility with online and distance education and how that is provided for professionals needing post-graduate degrees or credentials. In a meeting earlier this week with academic colleagues, she was reminded that when something isn't going as well as planned all need to keep pushing and find ways to make it better and sometimes that involves giving it more time. The pandemic has become the central reason in much of what is occurring and she does not think now is the right time for any tuition and fee increase, regardless of the associated relativity. Although the recommendation is to allow the administration to assess the 1 percent tuition increase if necessary, approving this action sends a negative message to prospective and current students at all levels and the University may not have explored all options well enough. She encourages all to keep trying and find ways to think innovatively in academic and budgeting approaches that would attract a greater number of students at all levels across the delivery formats and also across the disciplines. To her, that is doing the right thing and for this reason this is a recommendation, on behalf of the faculty, she cannot support at this time.

President Jackson reported that information was provided in terms of where Murray State compares to other institutions in the Commonwealth. The University is at the bottom of the list in terms of cost but additional cuts can certainly be considered to produce a budget that may be reduced even further. Regent Shemberger recognizes the placement of Murray State on the list but still wonders what more can be done to make the University shine better in response to other

fiscal challenges. President Jackson confirmed an additional review of where further cuts can be made will be undertaken to ensure the institution is being fiscally responsible. Assurance was provided that this is vitally important to the entire administration. Last year, \$7 million was cut from the University's budget. Murray State can keep making cuts but he does not recommend this course of action because that is moving the institution in the wrong direction. Over the last three years the University has moved in the right direction and will continue to do so. Chair Rhoads added that the budgetary cuts and adjustments which have been made have prevented the necessity of furloughs and layoffs of personnel. President Jackson confirmed this to be the case and added that no benefits or salaries were reduced. Murray State is one of few public institutions in the multi-state region to be able to make this claim. He is proud no employees missed a paycheck because it was not easy to accomplish and took a great toll on the administration.

Regent Tharpe indicated he understands the pain associated with any increases during this time but the University must look past the pandemic in order to be in a position to be able to absorb some of these increases. No one is happy about approving increases but it is necessary moving into a more normal reality and he supports the recommendation for this reason. President Jackson reported that the 1 percent increase amounts to approximately \$65 annually on a net tuition basis per student, if utilized, once scholarships are taken into consideration. The motion being presented would allow for up to a 1 percent increase.

Regent Norman stated he completely agrees with Regent Shemberger. Graduate school students, in addition to undergraduate students, have reached out to him and from their perspective the University should be as competitive as possible with tuition rates and it is extremely important to keep tuition and mandatory fee rates the same for another year, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of the students, he appreciates Regent Shemberger's comments.

The roll was called with the following voting: Mr. Crigler, yes; Dr. Fitch, yes; Mrs. Gray, yes; Ms. Green, yes; Mr. Norman, no; Mr. Owens, yes; Mrs. Rudolph, yes; Mr. Schooley, yes; Dr. Shemberger, no; Dr. Tharpe, yes and Mr. Rhoads, yes. The motion carried by a vote of nine (9) to two (2).

2021-22 Housing Rates, approved

President Jackson reported that information has been provided to show how Murray State compares to peer institutions in terms of housing costs and a zero percent rate increase is being recommended.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Regent Crigler moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, approve the 2021-22 housing rates as presented, effective Fall Semester 2021. Regent Rudolph seconded and the motion carried.

Full Board Action – 2021-22 Housing Rates, approved

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Regent Owens moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, approve the 2021-22 housing rates for the residence halls as listed below, effective Fall Semester 2021.

Residence Hall	2020 -21	Rate Change	2021 -22
Springer II (not planning to utilize for Fall 2021)			
Double Room	\$2,470	\$ -	\$2,470
Private Room	\$3,668	\$ -	\$3,668
RH White and Regents			
Double Room	\$2,715	\$ -	\$2,715
Private Room	\$3,911	\$ -	\$3,911
Hart			
Double Room	\$2,769	\$ -	\$2,769
Private Room	\$3,990	\$ -	\$3,990
Elizabeth and Hester			
Double Room	\$3,022	\$ -	\$3,022

Private Room	\$4,240	\$ -	\$4,240
HC Franklin, Clark and JH Richmond			
Double Room	\$3,462	\$ -	\$3,462
Designed Private Room	\$3,896	\$ -	\$3,896
Double as Private Room	\$4,675	\$ -	\$4,675
College Courts			
1 Bedroom Apt	\$2,445	\$ -	\$2,445
2 Bedroom Apt	\$2,965	\$ -	\$2,965
The \$10 residence hall activity fee will be added for all halls, excluding College Courts, approved May 2018.			

Regent Tharpe seconded.

The roll was called with the following voting: Mr. Crigler, yes; Dr. Fitch, yes; Mrs. Gray, yes; Ms. Green, yes; Mr. Norman, yes; Mr. Owens, yes; Mrs. Rudolph, yes; Mr. Schooley, yes; Dr. Shemberger, yes; Dr. Tharpe, yes and Mr. Rhoads, yes. The motion carried unanimously.

2021-22 Dining Rates, approved

President Jackson reported that in Fall 2019 the University signed a contract with Sodexo to provide dining services on campus. Sodexo has allowed the University to move forward to bring nationally-branded food options to campus for recruitment and retention purposes and the good of faculty and staff. During the last couple of years Chick-fil-A, Starbucks, Steak ‘n Shake and Einstein Bros. Bagels, as well as other national eating brands, have come to campus and are providing benefits to students. Per that contract, Sodexo is able to increase dining rates based on food inflationary costs as defined as food away from home rates. The rate this year is 3.35 percent. The University is affirming Sodexo’s ability to increase rates in compliance with the contractually-granted inflationary increase included in the contract that is in place with the University.

Mr. Looney reported that dining plans have also been changed as requested by students. Processes are in place to engage student dialogue with dining partners to understand how well their needs and expectations are being met. Several focus group sessions have been conducted over the past year to assess and evaluate how meal plans are accepted by students and identify any changes or improvements that are needed. Students have requested more access to the national brands on campus as part of their meal plan alignment. In response, the structuring of meal plan offerings was reviewed over the course of the year to identify ways to bring more selection and value to the meal plan offerings, specifically for first-year students who have a meal plan requirement. These students indicated they would like for their meal plan to be able to be used in the national brand locations. Three plans have now been created - Racer Premium Plan, Gold Access Plan and Blue Access Plan – and all have different levels of access to Winslow Dining Hall and meal exchanges with the national brands. All plans are at the same price point which allows students to make good selections about their dining needs based on their preferences and how they would like to use dining services on campus. This approach focuses less on price while providing students with options that best fit their needs. The eight meals a week option was also maintained for second-year students.

Regent Crigler commended Mr. Looney and his staff for working with the outside vendor and students to provide the various options and add value to the meal plan options available. All are to be commended for their efforts. Regent Rhoads reported this has represented an important recruiting tool for prospective students when they are given more flexibility relative to available dining options.

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Regent Rhoads moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, approve the dining services meal plans and rates for Fiscal Year 2021-22 as presented, effective for the 2021 Fall Semester. Regent Crigler seconded and the motion carried.

Full Board Action – 2021-22 Dining Rates, approved

On behalf of the Finance Committee, Regent Owens moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the President of the University, approve the meal plans and rates for Fiscal Year 2021-22 as listed below, effective for the 2021 Fall Semester.

Meal Plan	Proposed New Meal Plan	2020-21		Change	2021-22	
		Price	Flex	3.35%	Price	Flex
All Access Premium	Racer Premium ⁽¹⁾	\$2,097	\$75	\$68	\$2,165	\$75
New	Gold Access 19 ⁽²⁾	-	-	-	\$2,165	\$200
New	Blue Access 10 ⁽³⁾	-	-	-	\$2,165	\$750
8 Meals Per Week	Dunker Deluxe 8 ⁽⁴⁾	\$1,846	\$550	\$43	\$1,889	\$550

⁽¹⁾ Unlimited access to Winslow Dining Hall, six meal exchange offerings per week for all locations anytime.

⁽²⁾ Nineteen meals per week to Winslow Dining Hall, five meal exchange offerings per week for all locations anytime.

⁽³⁾ Ten meals per week in Winslow Dining Hall, no meal exchange offerings.

⁽⁴⁾ Eight meals per week in Winslow Dining Hall, no meal exchange offerings.

Regent Rudolph seconded.

Regent Shemberger asked whether the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is standard across the Sodexo contract or whether it is more specific to Murray State. Mr. Looney confirmed that the CPI is the federal Consumer Price Index. The food away from home component is the specific section of the food industry. This represents an industry-wide practice that exists in almost every outsourcing contract with universities and contains standard language. The 3.35 percent increase is a national number. In terms of marketing efforts, the meal plan is composed of three types – meals at Winslow Dining Hall, a meal exchange option where students can change one of their meals at Winslow for meals at national brand locations on campus and the flex dollar plan that operates like cash and can be used for any purchases on campus. These plans will be tailored even further to cater to where the student wants to eat the majority of the time. Students have different needs and desires. If a student has food allergies, Winslow Dining Hall is the best dining venue for them. Marketing will be based on educating students about how the three different types of transactions work based on their food preferences. Assistance will be provided to students and parents to help them determine the best meal plan option. President Jackson confirmed Regents are being asked to approve what is already contractually granted to Sodexo by this Board and the University. Mr. Looney confirmed that the new meal exchange will be valid any time the dining venues are open.

The roll was called with the following voting: Mr. Crigler, yes; Dr. Fitch, yes; Mrs. Gray, yes; Ms. Green, yes; Mr. Norman, no; Mr. Owens, yes; Mrs. Rudolph, yes; Mr. Schooley, yes; Dr. Shemberger, no; Dr. Tharpe, yes and Mr. Rhoads, yes. The motion carried by a vote of nine (9) to two (2).

Adjournment

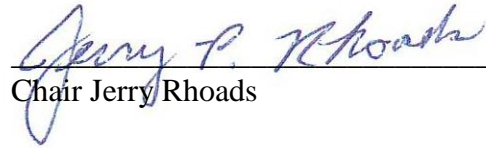
The Finance Committee adjourned at 9:52 a.m.


Chair Rhoads reported that the June 4, 2021, Quarterly Meeting will be held in person, most likely in the Hall of Benefactors in Heritage Hall.

President Jackson reminded the Board that Senior Breakfast would be held on Tuesday, April 27, 2021, beginning at 8 a.m. in the CFSB Center. The event will also be livestreamed. In addition, four Commencement ceremonies are planned. The first will be for graduate students at 7 p.m. on Friday, May 7, 2021. The remaining three ceremonies will be held on Saturday, May 8, 2021, at 8 a.m., 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., respectively. All ceremonies will be held in the CFSB Center.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Rhoads requested a motion for the Special Meeting of the Board of Regents to adjourn. Regent Shemberger so moved, seconded by Regent Tharpe, and the motion carried unanimously. Adjournment was at 9:55 a.m.


Chair Jerry Rhoads


Secretary Jill Hunt

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