

**Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Board of Regents
Murray State University
November 20, 2024**

Call to Order/Roll Call

The Murray State University (MSU) Board of Regents met on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, in Special Session in Room 118 Wells Hall on the Murray State University campus. Chair Leon Owens called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. and welcomed those joining in person and via ZOOM or livestream. Secretary Jill Hunt called roll and the following Board members were present: Robbie Fitch (via ZOOM), Virginia Gray (via ZOOM), Brendan Hawkins, David Meinschein (via ZOOM), G. L. Ovey, Leon Owens, Matthew Price (via ZOOM), Emily Roark (via ZOOM), Melony Shemberger, Tom Waldrop and David Wilson. Absent: none.

Participants in the meeting 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, Senior 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; additional members of the MSU administration; Information Technology staff and members of the University community, general public and news media.

AGENDA

Call to Order

Chair Owens

Roll Call

Secretary Hunt

Committee Reports/Recommendations

A. Academic Excellence and Scholarly Activities		Regent Shemberger
1)	Honorary Doctorate Committee Recommendation*	

Adjournment

Chair Owens

(*Requires Board of Regents Action)

Academic Excellence and Scholarly Activities Committee

Melony Shemberger – Chair
Virginia Gray
David Meinschein
G. L. Ovey
David Wilson

Chair Shemberger called the Academic Excellence and Scholarly Activities Committee to order at 3:01 p.m. and reported all members were present.

Honorary Doctorate Committee Recommendation – Honorary Doctor of Education – Dr. Aaron Thompson – Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, approved

Background information was provided to the Board regarding Honorary Doctorate degrees. The bestowing of an Honorary Doctorate Degree denotes a significant recognition by Murray State University for exemplary actions by distinguished individuals, subject to approval by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President of the University, and awarding of such a degree should be conferred by official action of the MSU Board of Regents.

At the Special Board of Regents meeting on December 4, 2014, the Board approved the *Murray State University Honorary Doctorate Degree Policy* as an official policy of the Murray State

University Board of Regents. The policy is included in the *Board Policy Manual* and any changes to existing policy will be made to reflect the provisions contained therein. The membership of the Honorary Doctorate Degree Committee includes:

- 1) Two members of the Board of Regents appointed by the Chairman of the Board
- 2) One senior faculty member appointed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
- 3) The President or his/her designee

In 2024, Chair Leon Owens, Vice Chair Robbie Fitch and Regent Melony Shemberger were named to serve as the representatives of the Board of Regents on the Honorary Doctorate Committee. Regent Shemberger also represents a senior faculty member in her capacity as Professor of Journalism and Mass Communications. President Bob Jackson is a member of the Committee and Board Secretary Jill Hunt serves as an Ad Hoc member.

Regent Shemberger reported that the Honorary Doctorate Degree Committee met on July 19, 2024, and unanimously recommends that Murray State University officially bestow an Honorary Doctorate upon Dr. Aaron Thompson, President of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. The Committee was unanimous in determining that Dr. Thompson meets the established criteria for receipt of an Honorary Doctorate from Murray State University and his service is certainly worthy of honor and his national reputation is notable.

On behalf of the Academic Excellence and Scholarly Activities Committee, Regent Ovey moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the Honorary Doctorate Degree Committee, approve the awarding of a Murray State University Honorary Doctor of Education to Dr. Aaron Thompson during the December 2024 Commencement ceremony. Regent Wilson seconded and discussion followed.

Regent Shemberger indicated she has had the honor of knowing Dr. Thompson for approximately three years and was fortunate to be a part of the Faculty Advisory Network that he formed within the CPE. She learned a great deal from Dr. Thompson who is a true champion for higher education in Kentucky. He has helped all to reconceptualize what an academic achievement can be – whether by way of a degree or other credential. When the Honorary Doctorate Committee met in July, all talked highly of Dr. Thompson. His resume was provided in the eBoard book for Regents. For the record, the resume is about 40 pages but captures what his essence has been in Kentucky. Dr. Thompson is a Kentucky native, having earned degrees in the state, and he has already received Honorary Doctorates from four other schools in the Commonwealth.

President Jackson reported he has worked with Dr. Thompson for many, many years. They came into their respective positions at about the same time during the summer of 2018. President Jackson chaired the Council of Presidents for approximately five years with Dr. Thompson which provided an opportunity for them to work together very closely. He is surprised Dr. Thompson's curriculum vita is only 40 pages. He is a distinguished educator in every respect. He has distinguished himself in Kentucky and the country. Dr. Thompson is a friend to Murray State, and many personally, and his good work in the Commonwealth of Kentucky for Murray State University and beyond is very much appreciated. President Thompson will be a great speaker for the students during Commencement and he is very deserving of this award.

Regent Waldrop reported that he was unable to attend the recent CPE Postsecondary Education Trusteeship Conference but he did attend the conference during his first year on the Board. It was clear that Dr. Thompson is a passionate and articulate advocate leader for higher education. He has maintained this passion during challenging times for postsecondary education. The awarding of this Honorary Doctorate is a “slam dunk” for him.

The motion carried.

Full Board Action – Honorary Doctorate Committee Recommendation – Honorary Doctorate of Education – Dr. Aaron Thompson – Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, approved

On behalf of the Academic Excellence and Scholarly Activities Committee, Regent Shemberger moved that the Board of Regents, upon the recommendation of the Honorary Doctorate Degree Committee, approve the awarding of a Murray State University Honorary Doctor of Education to Dr. Aaron Thompson during the December 2024 Commencement ceremony. Regent Ovey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Owens declared the Special Meeting of the Board stands in adjournment. Adjournment was at 3:07 p.m.


Secretary Jill Hunt


Chair Leon Owens

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