



INTRODUCTION

As President of Middle Tennessee State University, I am delighted to greet each of you at the beginning of this new academic year. I recently had the pleasure of formally addressing our University freshmen and their families at our annual University Convocation and our outstanding faculty at our Fall Faculty Meeting. By all indications, we have selected an outstanding class of very capable and enthusiastic students to join our existing community of scholars, and our

faculty and staff are prepared for yet another exciting and productive year.

As we move forward, I encourage each of you to remain focused on the mission this great institution and on the three pillars of our Academic Master Plan, which involve promoting academic quality, student success through a student-centered learning culture, and partnerships and public service. Your commitment to these ideals is at the heart of MTSU's success.

Please know that I am proud to have the privilege of working with each of you here at *Tennessee's Best* comprehensive university, and with your continued hard work and support, I look forward to a very successful year. Thank you for your service and commitment to MTSU.

Sidney A. McPhee

NEWS AND INFORMATION

Fall 2009 Enrollment

The preliminary projection for Fall 2009 enrollment is approaching a record of 25,000 students. The official enrollment numbers for this semester will be announced on the 14th day of classes.



University Convocation

The eighth annual University Convocation took place Sunday, August 30, in Murphy Center. This event, which was created to formally introduce new freshmen to the MTSU academic community, featured speaker Michael Gates Gill, author of *How Starbucks Saved My Life*. In the book, Gill chronicles his journey from a former high-level advertising executive to a barista at Starbucks. Along with Gill's Convocation presentation, he appeared at Linebaugh Public Library and interacted with students in the College of Mass Communication on the first day of classes.



Appreciation and recognition go to the faculty members, administrators, and student leaders who participated in the event and to Dr. Deb Sells and the staff from the Division of Student Affairs for their planning efforts.

Recent National Rankings

The prestigious *Forbes'* magazine recently published its 2009 annual rankings of America's Top College and Universities. Our university was ranked as the 57th best public institution in America and the only public university in the State of Tennessee to be ranked in the top 100. Additionally, MTSU was ranked #47 in the country among all institutions, both public and private, in the category of "America's Best College Buys". In addition to the *Forbes'* rankings, for the second year in a row, MTSU has been named as one of the best universities in the Southeast by *Princeton Review*.

These rankings reaffirm MTSU's position of quality among other highly regarded institutions and are a positive reflection on our faculty and staff who are committed to providing students with a quality education in a nurturing, student-centered environment.

Budget Update

The budget crisis remains a very critical issue here in the State of Tennessee. MTSU is well positioned to address the challenges associated with the current economic downturn and has already begun the process of implementing some of the recommendations approved in the *Positioning the University for the Future* Report. (This report is available for viewing on our Web site at www.mtsu.edu/strategic.)

With \$19.3 million already permanently taken from the University's budget and replaced with one-time stimulus funding for the next two years, streamlining and restructuring throughout the University must continue in order to be prepared for July 1, 2011. We are expected to receive \$17.6 million in Stimulus funds for each of the next two fiscal years.

The use of these funds will be consistent with the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund Program guidelines and will be used as follows:

For the first year (2009-2010), \$15.9 million will be used for operating cost, including general costs, scholarships, and the employee voluntary buy-out plan. This replaced the reductions the state made. The balance for this year will be used for a capital projects and equipment purchases, including desktop computers. For the second year (2010-2011), approximately \$5 million will be used for operating and the balance for projects and purchases consistent with the guidelines.

The most important aspect of receiving the stimulus funds rests in the fact that they will allow the University to maintain staff and provide for an orderly transition of any personnel reductions that may be needed. It is hoped that the voluntary buy-out program, which was formally announced at the end of July, will help the University to avoid a reduction in force.

Voluntary Buy-Out Program

Starting November 30, MTSU will begin accepting applications for a voluntary buy-out program as a means of reducing expenditures related to salaries and benefits. The University expects to realize approximately \$4.7 million in savings through this voluntary program if it receives the level of interest and response that has been outlined in its proposal. Those who are approved for the program would have an employment separation date of June 30, 2010, but that date can be adjusted in certain instances. The MTSU Human Resource Services Web site, <http://hrs.web.mtsu.edu>, provides extensive details about the plan, including answers to frequently asked questions. The site also provides a list of deadlines and key activities associated with the Plan that are important to prospective participants.



Tuition Increase

The Tennessee Board of Regents approved a six percent tuition increase for MTSU at its June 2009 meeting. Any new revenue generated from this increase will first be used to cover fixed cost increases such as utilities, scholarship increases, faculty promotion, and increased fringe benefits costs. A portion of that revenue may also be used for new initiatives that have been designed to position the University for the future.

Any balances that become available from the modest increase that is anticipated as a result of the tuition increase and enrollment growth will be used to mitigate other reductions. The University will continue to work on budget reductions consistent with the its *Positioning the University for the Future* plan and provide regular updates via multiple channels, including campus E-mail and the *Positioning the University for the Future Web site*.

Capital Projects/Facilities Update

MTSU continues to move forward with the planning and development of several capital projects across campus. At present, there are about \$400 million in projects underway. Some of these include:

- **Middle Tennessee Boulevard**—The bid process is expected to get underway in February 2011, with the 18-month construction phase beginning in spring 2011. Substantial completion of the project is expected by the end of 2012.
- **Student Union**—Major site work is expected to start in October of this year, with completion around the end of year 2011.
- **College of Education and Behavioral Science**—Work has already begun on this project and with a targeted completion of September 2011.
- **Dairy Farm**—Plans are underway to relocate the MTSU Dairy Farm to the 446-acre Guy James Property.
- **Food Service Improvements**—Construction on a 3,000 square foot addition to McCallie Dining Hall is expected to start this fall; The KUC “refresh” project, which includes adding Einstein Bagel and Coffee and more seating is near completion. Each food venue will now have its own register, which will help reduce wait times. Web-based order kiosks are available in the Business and Aerospace Building and outside of the KUC, which will allow diners to prepay for their orders before pickup. Similar services are expected to be available for campus residence hall access soon.
- **Tucker Theater Renovation**
Planning continues for renovating Tucker Theatre, which will feature new seating for over 900. Other upgrades include: the lobby, restrooms, sprinkler system, ADA improvements. The renovation is expected to be complete by August 2010.

Blue Raider Athletics

Once again, MTSU’s Blue Raider athletes had another stellar year across the board, both on and off the field of play. Fifty-five percent of all student athletes at MTSU had a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher; 25 percent had a 3.5 or higher; and 17 student athletes had a GPA of at least a perfect 4.0. These percentages speak very highly of the intellectual capabilities of the student athletes and the level of support provided to these individuals by our coaches, faculty, and other personnel. Our athletics program, particularly football, continue to serve as a national model for building academic excellence and for



improving retention and graduation rates among student athletes as measured by the NCAA APR guidelines.

The following are a few of the major accomplishments of MTSU athletics programs over the past year:

- The Volleyball team won their first ever NCAA at-large tournament berth;
- MTSU earned the distinction of being Sunbelt Champions in Women's Basketball, Men's Indoor Track, Men's Golf, Men's Tennis and Baseball; and
- Several athletic facilities were dedicated, including the Dean Hayes Track and Soccer Stadium; the Reece Smith Baseball Field, and the Jeff Hendrix Golf Performance Center.



External Funding and Private Fundraising

The University secured some 38 million dollars in externally sponsored research and creative activity last year, which provided a significant boost in helping to develop and maintain a number of quality programs throughout campus and within the community.

In terms of private fundraising, MTSU saw a 15% increase in the number of alumni who supported programs and activities across campus. Like many schools around the country, the University experienced a decline in the actual dollar amount raised compared to previous years, but Vice President for Development and University Relations Joe Bales and his team have a plan in place to reverse this trend for the coming year. Mr. Nick Perlick, who joined the University in the spring of this year as the new Director of Development, will play a significant role in this endeavor. The University is extremely grateful for the financial support of its Blue Raider alumni and friends. Their support is vital to the continued growth and success of the University.

MTSU Virtual Tour/Web site Redesign

On August 17, MTSU launched a new, dynamic interactive virtual tour, which showcases the campus in a way in which it has never been seen before. The tour, which has been in the works for nearly a year, features interactive videos of the campus; commentary from faculty, staff, students and administrators; and a 3-D photorealistic map of the entire campus. The virtual tour can be accessed via a link on the MTSU home page or at www.mtsu.edu/virtualtour.

In connection with the launch of the virtual tour, a comprehensive heuristic review of the MTSU Web site has gotten underway and will result in the redesign of the University's Web site. The Heuristic review will help the University create a more user-focused

design which will focus on information data/content, technical functions, business requirements and branding and marketing efforts. The Committee assigned to guide the development of the new site will create a blog to keep the University community posted and their progress and to secure needed feedback throughout the process.

New Pharmacy

Earlier this year, MTSU opened its new campus Pharmacy, which features walk-in and drive-thru service for students, faculty and staff. Housed in the new wing of the Health, Wellness and Recreation Center, it is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday thru Thursday, with the drive-thru open until 5 p.m. and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Friday, with the drive-thru open until 4:30 p.m. As a full-service pharmacy, they can fill prescriptions from physicians outside of MTSU's Health Services clinic and patrons can transfer prescriptions from other pharmacies. In addition, they can process Cigna, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Medco, United Health Care, and Paid insurance plans for the same co-pays that are paid at other pharmacies. The University is extremely proud to offer this quality service to its campus community. Call 615-494-8888 for more details.

MTSU on Twitter

To address the growing population which uses social media to keep up with news and information about their favorite colleges and universities, the Office of News and Public Affairs is now maintaining an MTSU News Twitter Page. Follow us at www.twitter.com/mtsunews .

Challenges for the Coming Year

As is expected, budget reductions will continue to be a serious issue that will impact MTSU's efforts to successfully position itself for the future. The State Commissioner of Finance remains concerned about financial projections for the State, particularly as tax revenue in Tennessee has continued its downward trend. Despite the financial challenges, the University remains committed to the advancement of its mission and will focus its attention on reaching beyond expectations, moving closer toward the goals of improving the graduation and retention rates, continuing to increase private and external funding, and raising program quality to even great heights.



Other major issues anticipated for the University include discussions on higher education reform in the State and the rising national health concerns related to the spread of the H1N1 virus. The potential impact of both of these issues on MTSU is not yet known, but the University is preparing for each as the situation warrants.

Education Reform

As it relates to the on-going discussions regarding education reform in our state, faculty and staff are encouraged to take the opportunity, as appropriate, to communicate MTSU's position as a leading institution of higher learning in the State. As a key player in the general development of the middle Tennessee Region and the State of Tennessee as a whole, our importance to the future success of this State must remain in the front of the minds of legislators and other policy makers.

H1N1 Virus

In regard to the H1N1 virus, MTSU is taking a proactive approach to preparing the campus for any possible outbreaks of the virus and is engaged in an aggressive educational campaign to reduce the spread of flu among students, faculty and staff. For questions about the virus or for the latest information, MTSU students and personnel are encouraged to regularly check the Student Health Services Web site at <http://www.mtsu.edu/healthservices> or the Center for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov.

I hope that you will continue to find this e-newsletter informative and useful. I welcome your feedback and comments, which can be sent to smcphoe@mtsu.edu. As always, please know that I appreciate your support of Middle Tennessee State University.