



**Middle Tennessee State University
Board of Trustees
Academic Affairs, Student Life, and
Athletics Committee**

August 19, 2025
9:00 am

MEC Meeting Room – 2nd Floor
Miller Education Center
503 East Bell Street
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130



**Middle Tennessee State University
Board of Trustees**

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee

August 19, 2025
9:00 am

AGENDA

Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes (Action)..... [Tab 1](#)

Approval of Degrees under Consideration (Action)..... [Tab 2](#)

 Master of Science in Concrete and Construction Engineering

 Master of Science in Mechatronics Systems Engineering

 Doctor of Business Administration in Business Administration

Nursing Update (Information)..... [Tab 3](#)

Athletics Report (Information)..... [Tab 4](#)

Closing Remarks

Adjournment



**Middle Tennessee State University
Board of Trustees**

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee

Action Item

DATE: August 19, 2025

SUBJECT: **Minutes of the May 20, 2025
Academic Affairs, Student Life, and
Athletics Committee Meeting**

PRESENTER: Michael Wade
Acting Committee Chair

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on May 20, 2025. Minutes from the meeting are provided for review and approval.

**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, STUDENT LIFE, AND ATHLETICS COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

The Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on Tuesday, May 20, 2025, in the Miller Education Center Meeting Room at Middle Tennessee State University.

Call to Order

Committee Chair Pam Wright called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.

Opening Remarks

President McPhee recognized Kari Neely, incoming Faculty Trustee, and Michael Federici, incoming Faculty Senate President. They will be formally introduced in September.

Roll Call

Associate General Counsel Jeff Farrar called the roll. The following Committee members were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Tom Boyd, Pete DeLay, Bill Jones, Mary Martin, Steve Smith, Christine Vanek, Michael Wade, Pam Wright, Shaylaine Roker, and Keith Huber. Chris Massaro was absent. A quorum was declared.

President Sidney A. McPhee; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; Mark Byrnes, Provost; Yvette Clark, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Khalilah Doss, Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; Leah Ladley, Chief Audit Executive; and Kim Edgar, Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, were also in attendance.

Approval of Minutes - Action

The first agenda item was approval of the minutes from the February 25, 2025, Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee meeting. Trustee DeLay moved to approve the minutes

from the February 25, 2025, meeting, and Trustee Vanek seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve the minutes was approved unanimously.

Approval of Tenure and Promotion – Action

Provost Mark Byrnes presented 28 candidates for tenure and 58 candidates for promotion. The candidates presented their applications last September and had been thoroughly vetted in multiple steps throughout the academic year.

Trustee DeLay moved to approve the candidates for tenure and promotion, and Trustee Smith seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve 28 candidates for tenure and 58 candidates for promotion passed unanimously.

Approval of Modification to an Existing Academic Unit

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences – Action

Provost Mark Byrnes introduced Pete Grandjean, Dean of the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, to describe the process and rationale for the reorganization. He stated realigning the degree programs will provide more visibility and competitiveness. President McPhee complimented the innovative approach and added he expects to see growth in the programs due to the reorganization.

Trustee DeLay moved to approve the modification to the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, and Trustee Vanek seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve the modification to the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences passed unanimously.

Approval of New Academic Program

M.S., Project Management – Action

Vice Provost Amy Aldridge introduced Richard Tarpey, assistant professor of Management, who led the development of the proposal. Dr. Aldridge then presented an overview of the degree proposal, including alignment with MTSU's 2035 Strategic Plan and the state master plan and

projected expenditures and revenue. Students who graduate from this interdisciplinary program will be prepared to seek certification as project management professionals, and we will seek recognition from the Project Management Institute.

Trustee Smith moved to approve the Master of Science in Project Management, and Trustee DeLay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve the Master of Science in Project Management passed unanimously.

Approval of New Policy - Action

323 Instructional and Assignment Use of Artificial Intelligence

Vice Provost Brian Hinote began by thanking Eric Detweiler, associate professor of English, for leading the faculty workgroup that developed the new policy. Each instructor will set and discuss guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence in their course. It is the student's responsibility to adhere to the guidelines. Faculty and staff may use artificial intelligence as long as the use complies with professional standards and existing policies.

Trustee Baker moved to approve Policy 323 Instructional and Assignment Use of Artificial Intelligence, and Trustee DeLay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and the motion to approve Policy 323 Instructional and Assignment Use of Artificial Intelligence passed unanimously.

Policy 407 Research Security - Information

Vice Provost David Butler reported that Tennessee Code Annotated § 49-7-188 requires institutions to establish a research security policy to comply with all legal requirements and promote a culture of compliance. Additionally, each institution's governing board must report on the institution's compliance. University Policy 407 Research Security was established; a website has been created to consolidate all research security into one place; and President McPhee will send a letter to the education committee chairs notifying them of MTSU's compliance.

Post Approval Monitoring Report – Information

Vice Provost Amy Aldridge reported on three academic programs being monitored by THEC's post approval monitoring. The Tourism and Hospitality Management bachelor's program has exceeded projections, while the Dance and Religious Studies bachelor's programs have fallen short of their enrollment goals. We are supporting recruitment and student success for these programs. We believe that the students in all three of the programs are getting a very good education at MTSU, as demonstrated in the assessment data alignment with strategic plans and measures of student satisfaction.

Athletics Report - Information

Deputy Athletic Director Lee De León presented updates on athletic giving, BRAA membership, unrestricted gifts (Champions Annual Fund), the Build Blue campaign, and major gift activity (Sapphire Circle).

The ribbon cutting for the Student Athlete Performance Center will be July 30 at 9:00 AM. A new sound system has been installed at Murphy Center, and new turf is being installed at Floyd Stadium. The Overall Academic Progress Rate is 984.

Adjournment

Committee Chair Wright adjourned the meeting at 11:43 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee



**Middle Tennessee State University
Board of Trustees**

Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee

Action Item

DATE: August 19, 2025

SUBJECT: **Approval of Degrees Under Consideration
MS, Concrete and Construction Engineering
MS, Mechatronics Systems Engineering
DBA, Business Administration**

PRESENTER: Amy Aldridge
Vice Provost for Academic Programs

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Per THEC Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process, “Prior to inclusion on the Commission agenda, an institution must have received institutional governing board approval in alignment with institutional/system policies regarding new program approval. Approval from the institutional governing board can be attained at any time in the development of the proposed program, but documentation of approval must be provided prior to Commission consideration” (see A1.0.8A Institutional Governing Board Approval).

The following academic programs are under consideration at Middle Tennessee State University. Pending the approval of the governing board, the university may submit a New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

Master of Science in Concrete and Construction Engineering

The School of Concrete and Construction Management (SCCM) in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences proposes a Master of Science (M.S.) in Concrete and Construction Engineering (CCE) to meet the growing demand for advanced education in the construction and concrete industries. The program will consist of 30 credit hours and offer both thesis and coursework options to accommodate both working professionals and recent graduates.

The M.S. in CCEE is designed to serve a rapidly expanding industry that contributes nearly \$1.3 trillion annually to the U.S. economy and supports over 475,000 high-income jobs in construction management. The Nashville metropolitan area is experiencing unprecedented growth, with over \$5.88 billion in construction spending in 2024 and projections to exceed \$10 billion by 2025. The M.S. in CCE will prepare graduates to lead in this dynamic environment by equipping them with advanced skills in materials science, construction methods, project management, and emerging technologies.

No other institution in Tennessee currently offers a graduate program under the 14.0401 Federal CIP code, and only the University of Florida offers a similar program in the Southeast. The proposed degree aligns with MTSU's Strategic Plan 2035 and the THEC Master Plan by expanding graduate education, supporting workforce development, and enhancing research capacity. The program will be delivered in person, with future consideration for online options, and will be funded entirely through program revenue, requiring no new state appropriations. Costs are expected to be minimal, with no new faculty hires expected within the first five years.

Master of Science in Mechatronics Systems Engineering

The College of Basic and Applied Sciences is seeking to create a Master of Science in Mechatronics Systems Engineering (MSE). Mechatronics is an interdisciplinary field that focuses on the integration of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, and computer science/engineering.

Housed in the Department of Engineering Technology, the M.S. in MSE will be offered with both a 30-hour nonthesis and 36-hour thesis option. It will be offered through a combination of on-ground, online, and hybrid courses, making it accessible to both traditional students and working professionals. The curriculum will feature robotics, control systems, computer vision, artificial intelligence, and system engineering courses. Projected new costs are minimal and include graduate teaching assistants.

According to a recent feasibility study performed by Hanover Research, conferrals of master programs related to mechatronics and robotics engineering had an annual increase rate of 10.3% across the United States from 2018-2022. There are currently no mechatronics engineering master programs offered in the state of Tennessee and the broader Southeast Region.

Doctor of Business Administration in Business Administration

The Jennings A. Jones College of Business (JCOB) proposes a Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) in Business Administration to prepare scholar-practitioners who advance business knowledge through applied research. The program targets experienced professionals seeking leadership, consulting, or postsecondary teaching roles.

The 60-credit-hour program will be delivered in a flexible hybrid format, combining online coursework with monthly in-person campus residencies. Core courses (30 CH) will cover leadership, analytics, marketing, finance, strategy, and pedagogy; 12 CH will focus on research methods, and 18 CH will be dedicated to the dissertation.

A recent Hanover Research study confirms strong and growing demand for doctoral-level business programs in the Southeast, with demand outpacing supply. The DBA also addresses a national shortage of academically qualified business faculty, as noted by AACSB.

The program aligns with MTSU's mission and Strategic Plan 2035 by expanding access to advanced education, supporting workforce development, and enhancing applied research capacity. It will be the first DBA offered by a public university in Middle Tennessee. All startup and operational costs will be covered by program revenue, with no new state appropriations required.



**Middle Tennessee State University
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Information Item

DATE: August 19, 2025

SUBJECT: **Nursing Update**

PRESENTER: Peter Grandjean
Dean, College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Dean Grandjean will provide an update on the School of Nursing.



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Information Item

DATE: August 19, 2025

SUBJECT: **Athletics Report**

PRESENTER: Chris Massaro
Athletics Director

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Mr. Massaro will provide an update on the Department of Athletics.