From the Dean’s Desk

I am pleased to share the College of Education’s inaugural newsletter. Through the highlights, spotlights, and updates, you will see our commitment to being Difference Makers. As I continue to meet with faculty, staff, students, and key stakeholders, I invite you to become thought partners as we think about what it means to Lead the Future and build upon the College’s strengths and points of pride. It is my hope that we continue the work of 1) creating spaces of connectedness through belonging and access, 2) developing transformative programs, 3) engaging in innovative research, scholarship and creative activities, 4) fostering collaborative partnerships, and 5) empowering families and communities.

At times, I know that change can be difficult and somewhat uncomfortable. However, one of my goals is that you feel seen, heard and understood. As Dean, it is my honor and privilege to serve such a dynamic group of faculty, staff, and students. I look forward to embarking on another year of academic excellence.
TRUE BLUE TOUR DATES
October 17, 2023 – Lexington, KY
October 18, 2023 – Louisville, KY
October 24, 2023 – Johnson City, TN
October 25, 2023 – Knoxville, TN
November 2, 2023 – Chattanooga, TN
November 8, 2023 – Memphis, TN
November 9, 2023 – Jackson, TN
November 15, 2023 – Birmingham, AL
November 16, 2023 – Huntsville, AL

TRUE BLUE PREVIEW DAY
November 4, 2023 – at MTSU

LITERACY NIGHT
In September, faculty and students from the Department of Elementary and Special Education helped with a Reading and Math game night at Mitchell-Nelson. The turnout was incredible! Special thanks to Dr. Jeremy Winters, Dr. Katie Schrodt, and their MTSU students for ALL their hard work in making it a huge success and to Read to Succeed for giving out free books.

CEM FAFSA VIDEO SERIES
CEM will be working with MTSU Financial Aid staff to produce videos about how to complete the FAFSA. The videos will be posted on the CEM website and will be shared with MTSU Financial Aid for their use.

TAKE A TITAN 2 SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP
In a news article written by MTSU’s DeAnn Hays, the College of Education is recognized for their partnership with WKRN News 2 for the successful “Take a Titan 2 School” campaign. The campaign continues on Tuesdays through December.

As an award-winning program for teacher preparation, consistently producing “the most effective” teachers in Tennessee, COE strives to help students become Difference Makers!

In one visit, Dean Neporcha Cone declares that educators are the “backbone of democracy.”
COE SPOTLIGHT & AWARDS

NEW EMPLOYEES

COE’s Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity (FJE) would like to welcome Tara Wallace and Mia Zellars to our team!

Tara Wallace is joining the FJE as the Recruitment and Engagement Specialist for the Tennessee Teach Back Initiative (TTBI). Tara has a background in Education and Technology and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. Tara has served as a Transfer Enrollment Coordinator in the MTSU Admissions Office and was primarily focused on East TN transfer students for that role. As the TTBI Recruitment and Engagement Specialist, Tara will be visiting high schools, community colleges, and communities throughout the state to recruit students to become future difference makers and TTBI scholars through the College of Education.

Mia Zellars is joining the FJE as the COE Student Engagement Coordinator. Mia has a background in Mental Health and Wellness Counseling and Education. She holds an MEd in Professional Counseling and a BA in Psychology. Mia has served as a mental health and wellness counselor for MCS’s Extended School Program and has substitute taught for several years. As the COE Student Engagement Coordinator, Mia will engage with our current COE students by providing additional supports such as connecting students to University and community resources, mentoring, and providing advocacy.

ASSESSMENT, LEARNING & SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT (ALSI)

The entire cohort in Smyrna of the ALSI EdD (Cohort X) is presenting at CPED in Florida in October. It will be a neat opportunity for ALSI students to be a showcase part of the CPED convening as they will each be presenting individually (based on their own research) and as part of a reflective look at what it's like to engage as a scholar practitioner while working full time in K12 contexts.

ASSESSMENT, LEARNING & STUDENT SUCCESS (ALSS)

The ALSS team and Murfreesboro City Schools have begun work on research for MCS analyzing literacy and math instruction in the district to identify barriers to use of HQIM and inform district action to support teachers moving forward.

STUDENT AWARDS

The Tennessee Educators of Color Alliance TECA held their inaugural E3: Elevating Excellence in Education Awards Dinner on September 23rd where MTSU Secondary Education student, Jeremiah Phillips, received the Aspiring Educator Award. Dr. Michelle Stevens and Dr. Everette Singleton (pictured) were there to celebrate Jeremiah’s award.

FACULTY AWARDS

Congratulations to Dr. Katie Schrodt, Associate Professor in the Elementary & Special Education Department, for receiving an Outstanding Teaching Award at MTSU’s Welcome Back event on August 24th!

Congratulations also to Dr. Kat Mangione, Associate Professor in the Elementary & Special Education Department, for receiving the 2023 Distinguished Educator Award at the Tennessee Environmental Education Association Meeting.
HOMECOMING & OTHER NEWS

September/October 2023

HOMECOMING

In celebration of Homecoming, students, early learners, faculty, and staff helped transform the COE building lobby for the college's first-ever entry in the Homecoming Decorating contest. THANK YOU for everyone who helped and CONGRATULATIONS on the third-place finish!!!

During Homecoming Weekend, 2009 COE graduate Lauren Rhea was honored by the MTSU Alumni Association for Achievement in Education/Non-MTSU Faculty.

Lauren Rhea

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Rhea is passionate about educational access and student success. She represents the Tennessee Board of Regents in the Correctional Education Initiative, a statewide system of post-secondary education providing high-quality education, access, and choice to those incarcerated in Tennessee.

On Homecoming Day, the Ann Campbell Learning Center partnered with the June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students to provide an adorable entry to the Homecoming Parade. Later that afternoon, alumni, students, faculty, staff, and families enjoyed a Mixer and Tailgate Event in the Grove.

DYSLEXIA CENTER & CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL MEDIA COLLABORATION

The Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia continues to enjoy a strong partnership with the Center for Educational Media (CEM). CEM recorded and edited a series of short, educational videos for families of students with characteristics of dyslexia, which feature Center staff Dr. Tim Odegard, Dr. Melinda Hirschmann, and Erin Alexander. The videos feature experts from the Center for Dyslexia addressing topics important to raise awareness about the dyslexia community and their needs. These topics include answers to commonly asked questions about dyslexia, myths, and realities about dyslexia, structured literacy instruction, answers to common questions about structured literacy, and accommodations that support success for individuals with dyslexia. Each Friday in October (Dyslexia Awareness Month) one video will be released on the Center’s YouTube channel. Check them out!!

FACULTY GRANTS FROM THE PROVOST’S OFFICE

Applications for the Faculty Professional Development Travel Grant and the Instructional Enhancement Grant will be accepted until noon on Friday, October 20, 2023.

Guidelines and applications may be found at https://mtsu.edu/provost/awards/faculty-travel-grant.php and https://mtsu.edu/provost/awards/ie-grant.php

Applications (including the proposal, budget, supporting materials, if applicable, and signatures) must be scanned as ONE document and sent to provostgrants@mtsu.edu by the submission deadline.

All COE faculty are encouraged to apply!
To further support faculty in research and creative activity, including funded research, the COE is piloting a new position in the college called Research Coordinator. Seth Jones will serve in this role. Responsibilities associated with this role include, but are not limited to:

- Leading strategic efforts to promote and increase scholarship, creative work, and sponsored research; assisting in cultivating faculty research; and working to develop innovative and collaborative initiatives.
- Working closely with the dean, program directors, faculty, and staff to establish and execute a strategic vision for research in COE.
- Chairing the COE Research Committee.
- Collaborating with the COE Research Committee to enhance faculty connectivity regarding research endeavors.
- Facilitating the generation of research products to disseminate the work done by students and faculty.
- Working to identify funding opportunities that support the range of faculty expertise within the college.
- Providing guidance in grant proposal development and implementation, and acting as a liaison to University wide research, scholarship, and funding initiatives.

The college will be conducting a search for a Strategic Communications and Marketing Director. Responsibilities associated with this role will include, but not be limited to:

- Developing and executing strategic communications, marketing and outreach plans for the COE, departments and centers, and other affiliated units for both internal and external audiences.
- Creating and executing a regional and national media relations program with the goal of publicizing the COE faculty, programs, and centers as high-quality choices for undergraduate and graduate students.
- Working collaboratively to create and implement initiatives to improve communication infrastructure, including proactive media relations, organizational communication, crisis communication, and frequent updating of the COE website content.
- Remaining abreast and provide expertise of current and emerging digital trends, best practices, and technologies.