


Dr. Sidney A. McPhee

August 22, 2014



WELCOME TO THE FALL 2014 SEMESTER!

I hope you and your family enjoyed a wonderful summer and I look forward to working with you in 2014–2015.

The beginning of each semester is a good time to reflect on recent accomplishments at MTSU and to look ahead to the many opportunities in our future. I trust you continue to find this newsletter informative and useful. I also welcome your feedback! Please send comments to Sidney.McPhee@mtsu.edu. I invite you to check out “The President’s Post” at www.mtsu.edu/President for updates and information from my office, or look for them on the MTSU home page. You can also follow me on Twitter: @PresidentMcPhee. 

Thank you for all you do to support the goals and objectives of this great university.

True Blue!

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OUR NEW CATALYST

I could not be more proud to announce that on October 15 we will officially open our new \$147-million Science Building.

As anyone familiar with science-related programs and infrastructure at MTSU will attest, the new building is as desperately needed as it is long overdue. And yet, when viewed in the greater context of other changes at MTSU and in Tennessee and beyond—from an evolving University mission to shifting funding formulas to exploding scientific frontiers—the timing actually couldn’t be better.

This project was the number-one priority of the University even before I got here 13 years ago. Since MTSU has the state’s largest undergraduate student population, the new Science Building is critical to our continuing efforts to provide Tennessee with graduates ready to succeed in today’s workforce. About 80 percent of all MTSU students will take classes in this new building.

Now in operation, the building is already helping MTSU create more science graduates to fill high-tech jobs, prepare

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ADMISSIONS

We continue to work extremely hard to ensure that our new and existing students get the attention they need and deserve to make attending MTSU a great experience and to see a clear path to graduation. To that end, we recently announced major changes in regard to future **scholarship opportunities**.

- For prospective students who meet the application requirements and deadlines, five major scholarships will be guaranteed.
- To attract more incoming freshmen, the University is adjusting ACT requirements to offer scholarships to more high school students eligible to take University Honors College classes and who complete their MTSU applications and meet the Dec. 1 priority deadline for applying.
- Major scholarships and their ACT adjustments are the Chancellor Scholarship (from 32 to 30), Presidential (from 29 to 28),

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more teachers for math and science in K–12 schools, and enhance the economy of our state and region. It immediately makes MTSU more competitive for research projects, science scholarship, and entrepreneurial efforts.

MTSU’s enrollment has almost quadrupled in the last 45 years but with no increased space for science education until now. Wisner-Patten Science Hall and Davis Science Building were built in 1932 and 1967, respectively, and have a combined total of only about 75,000 net square feet. The new Science Building has more than 250,000 gross square feet of classrooms, faculty and student research laboratories, and collaborative learning spaces.

Rest assured, those two older buildings that hold memories for generations of graduates now working in science fields or those who simply took science courses as undergraduates will be put to good use. They are scheduled for significant renovations that will completely revitalize them. Renovation schedules call for them to reopen by summer 2016. About \$20 million will be spent to get the job done.

Primary benefactors will be the Physics and Astronomy Department, which will take over much of Wisner-Patten Hall. The Davis Building will house the Geosciences Department, which recently moved from the College of Liberal Arts to the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. Geosciences’ departure from Kirksey Old Main will open space in MTSU’s oldest and most beloved building for expansion of the Computer Science Department.

The Davis Building will also become home to centers that need additional space, including the Center for Cedar Glade Studies and the Center for Environmental Education. Eighteen new student advisors working for the College of Basic and Applied Sciences will also be in Davis. Additional space in

the building will be used for research labs or future growth. These are just a few of the planned moves.

Consistent with our rich tradition of teacher training, the new Science Building is tailor-made for the science of education, designed to make learning and teaching a more productive and compelling experience. It follows ideas put forward by the nation’s foremost science and technology experts with regard to what works best for effective science and science education teaching. It includes discovery-based group-learning environments and spaces for informal discussion and collaborative interaction, all vital for establishing and promoting an ultramodern science education and research community.

Speaking of research, space in the new building will meet MTSU’s needs for many decades. Two upgrades will be particularly transformative. For the first time, MTSU now has a facility for conducting animal research. On the chemistry side, modern fume hoods now allow experiments that were long prohibited in our older buildings. As a result, the new building strengthens MTSU’s ability to pursue a solid, focused research agenda, and it significantly raises the University’s profile as a research institution.

MTSU grants about 700 degrees in biology, chemistry, and related fields each year. Now that the new Science Building is in operation, that number could increase by 25 percent.

MTSU’s new Science Building will be the portal through which we enter a new realm of science and research activity and compete for its rewards.

Has it been a long time coming? Definitely. But now that the science and research fetters have been broken, it’s time to get to work.

There’s a lot of science to be done!

ADMISSIONS

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Academic Service (from 27 to 26), Provost (from 26 to 25), and valedictorian/salutatorian (from 23 to 22). The required high school GPA remains 3.5. Guaranteed scholarship amounts range from \$2,000 to \$6,000 per year.

- Each scholarship requires students to work 75 hours during the semester or five hours per week in a department affiliated with their major.
- In addition, the University’s Transfer Academic Scholarships will switch from competitive-based to guaranteed for qualifying students transferring from any of the state’s 13 community colleges. Guaranteed scholarships for transfer students with 45–105 earned hours, 3.0 GPAs for community college transfers or 3.5 GPAs for transfers from four-year institutions is a game changer. It shows our institutional commitment to transfer students, and the changes coincide with the 2015 launch of Gov. Bill Haslam’s Tennessee Promise scholarship, which provides free tuition at community colleges for state residents as part of the effort to increase the number of Tennesseans with college degrees or certifications. We anticipate that the outcome of Tennessee Promise will be more students with associate degrees transferring to MTSU beginning in fall 2017.

MTSU hopes to **boost recruitment of incoming freshmen and transfer students** with these new scholarship eligibility requirements, which should ease the burden of rising tuition. These adjustments will allow us to offer more guaranteed scholarships to highly qualified students earlier in the recruiting cycle. Faculty members are our best ambassadors and recruiters, so please encourage students in your sphere of influence who have at least 3.5 high school GPAs and at least a 25 on the ACT to apply soon to be a part of the MTSU class of 2019.

Here are more news items and notes about admissions efforts:

- Faculty members know quite well what a great value MTSU is, and they are aware of the excellent care and instruction our students receive. I want to remind all MTSU faculty (and staff) that their own children **need look no further than MTSU** to find the best higher education in the state—and receive a 50 percent tuition discount!
- We have admitted fewer students through committee review, shaping the freshman class into **the most academically prepared** class.
- Last year, campus tours for prospective students increased 11.4 percent, special tours increased 36.25 percent, and preview days saw a 92.9 percent increase among prospective students.



True Blue Tour

In just a few weeks, the deans and I will join our Admissions recruiting staff on the road to travel Tennessee and meet with prospective students and their families and with high school guidance counselors. Here are the Fall **True Blue Tour** reception dates and sites:

- Sept. 17:** Chattanooga Convention Center, 1 Carter Plaza, Chattanooga
- Sept. 22:** The Millennium Centre, 2001 Millennium Place, Johnson City
- Sept. 23:** The Foundry on the Fair Site, 747 World’s Fair Park Drive, Knoxville
- Sept. 30:** Rocketown, 601 4th Ave. South, Nashville
- Oct. 22:** Memphis Botanic Gardens, 750 Cherry Road, Memphis
- Oct. 23:** Jackson Country Club, 31 Jackson Country Club Drive, Jackson

Chattanooga
Johnson City
Knoxville
Nashville
Memphis
Jackson

Continuing the Quest

My focus every single day is to shepherd University-wide efforts to improve student retention and to provide continuous support to keep them enrolled and on track to graduation. From the retooling of classes too many students have failed to the recent opening of a new \$16 million **Student Services and Admissions Center** and **MT One Stop**, examples abound of our collective focus on student success.

This emphasis on retention and graduation is not code for grade inflation. **It's the right thing to do.** And it's also perfectly aligned with the goals of the Tennessee General Assembly and governor's office. As faculty and staff members at MTSU, I know you are on board with this emphasis. I have told you on several occasions that **if students become an interruption in your day, you're in the wrong business!**

With the crucial help and development of Dr. Brad Bartel, our provost, MTSU launched its **Quest for Student Success** initiative in October 2013, creating extensive reforms aimed at helping students stay on track academically and complete their degrees. The University's goal is to boost its current 52 percent graduation rate to at least **62 percent by 2020.**

The Quest for Student Success concentrates on

- **stepping up recruitment of students with greater potential to succeed at a four-year comprehensive university;**
- **enhancing the academic experience to better ensure student success, including on-campus and online tutoring, more advising, and an emphasis on more high-tech and high-touch approaches; and**
- **using more innovative, proven techniques to help students flourish.**

For more information about MTSU's Quest for Student Success, go to www.mtsu.edu/studentssuccess.

In this quest, we are guided—driven, even—by 10 points that I first introduced in our town hall sessions last semester. For those of you who are new to MTSU and as a refresher for us all, I want to touch upon them once more.

www.mtsu.edu/studentssuccess

STUDENT SUCCESS

1. **Student success is born and nurtured in the classroom.** It is in the classroom that ideas are shared, critical thinking is introduced, and lifelong learning is encouraged. It is through instruction, in its many forms, that our students are stretched, equipped, and inspired. All else that happens on this campus, and I mean everything, happens in support of that process.
2. **The results will take time, but we cannot afford to take our time.** There is no silver bullet that will transform our retention rates in the next few days. Our success will happen over time, not overnight. That being said, we cannot allow ourselves to somehow dismiss the urgency of the moment. We must be fully committed to perform every function, take advantage of every opportunity, and be accountable for every responsibility so that student success becomes a reality, not just a rallying cry.
3. **We will customize what worked elsewhere and shape it to fit our context.** Other institutions have developed best practices that we have identified for our use. We must take advantage of the latest and most effective technologies and approaches. But we do not need to reinvent the wheel. And we will not attempt to merely apply cookie-cutter strategies gleaned from others.
4. **Our decisions are data-informed and not necessarily data-driven.** We choose to use data to move forward, to upgrade and expand. But not to restrict, reduce, or place blame. In short, data helps make better decisions but it will not pigeonhole our decision making.
5. **We will employ both high-tech and high-touch strategies to maximize our reach.** We will identify how we can better equip our faculty, staff, and administrators. Investments in new systems such as the EAB (Education Advisory Board) software are key to moving the needle of our success. Yet, while technology can boost our efficiency, nothing takes the place of genuine relationships that faculty and advisors have with students. We will not forfeit the human touch in favor of high tech.

6. **To maximize our momentum and synergy, we are developing connective projects.** We cannot be a random collection of good intentions on the part of various entities, but rather we must act in ways that are intentional and coordinated as a united educational community.
7. **We are proud of the students we have and are committed to serving them.** While we continue to build on our history of steadily increasing academic rigor, we will stay focused on our current students to help them reach their academic goals and potential as they move toward graduation. Beyond retention rates and funding formulas, serving the students we admit is our moral obligation.
8. **Our Quest for Student Success includes all, involves all, and invites all.** No single person or college is responsible for student success. What we will accomplish will be through all of us working together creatively and collaboratively. We are all in this boat together and must depend on each other to row in the same direction and at the same pace.
9. **Our most effective initiatives will affect the majority of our students.** Every student is unique, yet our research shows that most face the same or similar challenges. By developing programs that speak to most students, we better the most for success. For that reason, we have placed great importance on enhancing advising and tutoring and developing a sophomore experience akin to our existing freshman experience. Our new MT One Stop is another example of how we are providing better service for the greater number of our students.
10. **Lastly, in terms of success, to have something else we must do something else.** Higher education has a reputation for maintaining the status quo while the world changes around it. That approach is no longer sustainable, and both two-year and four-year institutions are getting the message. It is no longer acceptable to continue to go down the same road while saying we want to wind up somewhere else. It has been said that “the times set the agenda,” and we are, with clarity, moving forward with new ideas and fresh energy.



It is important to note **that these new ideas do not include watering down academic programs or relaxing rigor.** We have a moral imperative to not only enhance the present academic experience but to also continue to add value to the degrees already obtained by our alumni. Thus, we are not lowering the bar; we are—in many instances—**raising the standard for all of us, including students.**

There are many other examples of our commitment to the Quest for Student Success at MTSU. Here are a few more!

A Dedicated Leader. The plan to successfully pursue this quest included establishing a new vice provost position to provide leadership, vision, and strategic planning for student retention and success. The job is particularly focused on creating a learning environment where high expectations for student learning are linked to an effective system of academic support initiatives. Just last month, MTSU welcomed Dr. Richard “Rick” Sluder as the new vice provost for student success. He assumes his new role on Sept. 15. Dr. Sluder comes to MTSU after serving as vice provost for recruitment and outreach at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg. He helped UCM increase its enrollment and led its initiative to improve student retention and graduation rates. At UCM, he was also part of an effort to establish an Office of Military and Veterans Services to accommodate student veterans, and he worked to strengthen UCM partnerships with community colleges. Similar efforts have been high priorities at MTSU. Dr. Sluder will have a singular focus at MTSU: ensuring the academic success of the University's students.



Advising Initiative. A far-reaching initiative that shows conclusively that even in a tight budget environment we are committed to student success is our hiring of approximately 50 new advisors. These advisors will be housed in individual colleges and will have access to cutting-edge software designed to help shepherd students through their academic endeavors. Having these new advisors



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ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

MTSU introduced or will introduce several new academic programs and initiatives this fiscal year. First-year programs included the new B.S. in Mechatronics Engineering. We completed the program's first year with over 80 majors.

Programs to begin this fall include the following:

Department of Speech and Theatre

Bachelor of Science in Theatre

Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures

Minor in Humanities

Minor in Italian

Concentration in Japanese

Department of Health and Human Performance

Minor in Somatic Movement Education

School of Music

Change of M.A. in Music to Master of Music (M.M.)

Global Studies

Bachelor of Science in Global Studies and Cultural Geography (with concentrations in both Global Studies and Cultural Geography)

Certificate in U.S. Culture and Education

Department of Criminal Justice Administration

Revised 1978 MTSU-TSU Joint Master of Criminal Justice

University College

Master of Professional Studies Concentration in Human Resources Leadership

Other academic news and notes

- We submitted our application to continue our Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement.
- We are revisiting our Academic Master Plan for 2015–2025. An update is to be completed by March 15, 2015, under the leadership of Dr. Philip Phillips, associate dean of the University Honors College.
- We are in the process of developing our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) as part of our SACSCOC reaffirmation of accreditation process. Dr. Dianna Rust is leading this initiative and has the University on track to identify the focus of our campus-wide student learning project.

GOOD EXCHANGE



Presenting a banner to Miao Jianhua, second from right, director of the Guangxi Botanical Garden.

MTSU signed an agreement to extend its research partnership in China with the world's largest medicinal herb garden through 2021. The pact with the **Guangxi Botanical Garden** of Medicinal Plants also secures MTSU's worldwide rights, excluding China, to patent and market products developed in the partnership. The partners agreed to a 50-50 split of any profits from the collaboration. It extends an exclusive agreement that began in 2011 to accelerate the development of Western medicines from plant extracts. An analysis of 52 extracts recently provided by the garden identified 29 with promising results, including 12 with anti-cancer potential; eight with promising anti-inflammatory potential; and one that may be useful in the treatment of diabetes. This set of 52 extracts is in addition to almost 40 results identified last year that show promise in the treatment of cancer, viral infections, and other ailments.

In addition, a year-old partnership between MTSU and **Guangxi University** will enable 140 students from the south China institution to eventually come to Murfreesboro to study. Fifty-three (53) students will eventually enroll at MTSU to study finance in the Jennings A. Jones College of Business, and 34 will study business administration in Jones College. Forty-six (46) will study mathematics in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. This means that our partnership with Guangxi University has become one of our most productive and successful in less than a year. The students will enroll in a newly developed "three-plus-two" program between the universities, which will allow Guangxi students to finish their undergraduate degrees and earn graduate degrees while at MTSU.

State Sen. Bill Ketron, left, and I present Guangxi University V.P. Shang Nahong with a C-USA medallion



From left, Jedd Hilly, Rodney Crowell, Sidney A. McPhee, Bonnie Raitt, Ken Paulson, and Joe Henry



Here I am meeting with members of Maybe April and MTSU students Kristen Castro, front center, and Katy Bishop, center right

MASS APPEAL

Three former MTSU students were nominated for Grammys this year, and one was a Grammy winner. Michael Knox produced Jason Aldean's "Night Train," which was in the running for Best Country Album. Jessi Alexander cowrote two Best Country Song nominations: Lee Brice's "I Drive Your Truck" and Blake Shelton's "Mine Would Be You." Luke Laird coproduced the Kacey Musgraves album "Same Trailer, Different Park," which won Best Country Album. (Laird also cowrote many of the tracks.) More than a dozen MTSU alumni/former students and faculty have been nominated for Grammy Awards in the last three years, and seven have been winners. The College of Mass Communication hosted an event at the legendary Troubadour nightclub in Hollywood before this year's Grammy ceremonies. Myself, dean Ken Paulson, and department chair Beverly Keel met with alumni and friends at the event in an effort to increase the visibility of the department, long regarded as one of the best in the nation.

NOT SO RUN OF THE MILL

For three years, MTSU's exercise science experts have worked wonders with people who suffer from certain spinal cord injuries. Now, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is giving them the opportunity to perform a comprehensive study that could change the way health professions treat these patients. With a \$388,894 grant from the federal agency, Drs. Don Morgan and Sandy Stevens will recruit, test, and follow up with clients suitable for treatment in MTSU's underwater treadmill laboratory beginning this fall. Thirty participants, including some in a control group, will help the scientists determine the impact of underwater treadmill training on partially paralyzed individuals' mobility, health, and quality of life. Part of the NIH funding will pay undergraduate and graduate students for assisting with the study. It's a move that will better prepare MTSU graduates for jobs in the health professions and improve the University's research profile. The NIH-funded study is noteworthy for a university not connected to a college of medicine or a teaching hospital.



Carmen Thompson performing therapy in MTSU's underwater treadmill lab.



PRINT ON DEMAND

BLUE print Solutions, the University's first retail printing center, located on the first floor of the Student Union, continues growing and meeting the needs of the University community, especially in aiding students in their quest for success. The name is quite intentional: the printing center will do more than simply fulfill customer orders. The idea is to also provide creative solutions for a variety of graphic arts projects.

I am quite pleased with the efforts of BLUE print Solutions to meet and exceed the needs of its customers, including my office. Much like its commercial counterparts, BLUE print Solutions offers an array of auxiliary services including publication binding, large-format posters, passport photos, and the like. BLUE print Solutions operates seven days a week with day and night shifts.

Students have expressed their happiness with the help BLUE print Solutions employees have given them. BLUE print Solutions is focused on meeting the needs of students first, but it also serves faculty, staff, and the administration. It is also open to alumni and the general public.

The state-of-the-art facility is committed to looking for more ways to enhance the learning experience at MTSU. I can assure you that BLUE print Solutions stands ready to serve.

ATHLETICS



MTSU had an exciting and productive year during its first season of Conference USA action. The Blue Raiders won three championships, sent four teams to postseason play, and had 11 student-athletes advance to NCAA Championships. In the classroom, 159 student-athletes were on the Commissioner's List and 11 were named to various C-USA All-Academic teams.

Here are some selected highlights from the year that was in MT athletics:

During the spring 2014 semester, 9 of 17 teams had team GPAs of 3.0 or higher; 101 student-athletes made the Dean's List (3.5+ GPA), and 37 had a perfect 4.0. Overall, 193 of 340 student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher (57%).

For the fifth consecutive year, all 17 of Middle Tennessee's athletic teams earned a multiyear Academic Progress Rate (APR) of over 930 when the NCAA released its annual report in June.

In the state of Tennessee in football, Vanderbilt and Middle Tennessee led the way with APR scores of 974 and 972, respectively. Tennessee Tech was next (965), followed by Chattanooga (963) and Austin Peay (956). In **men's basketball**, the Blue Raiders' 981 ranked third in the state. The **women's basketball** team at MT turned in its highest score—982.

Ettore Zito

Two teams were recognized by the NCAA with Public Recognition Awards, based on their most recent multiyear APRs. These awards are given each year to teams with APRs in the top 10 percent in each sport. For the fourth consecutive year **men's golf** was honored, and **women's golf** also earned the award.

Middle Tennessee **football** was one of just 20 FBS programs to go to a bowl game, win at least eight games, and have an APR score of over 970.

The 2014 Middle Tennessee **men's tennis** squad was recognized by the Intercollegiate Tennis Association (ITA) for its academic excellence for the fourth consecutive year.

Senior Middle Tennessee runner **Autumn Gipson** was selected to the 2014 Capital One Academic All-America Women's Track and Field/Cross Country third team as announced by the College Sport Information Directors of America. Gipson is an Exercise Science major who maintained a 4.0 GPA.

The Middle Tennessee **soccer** and **softball** programs earned Conference USA 2013–14 Sport Academic Awards for their efforts in the classroom. The Blue Raider soccer team combined for

Tiffany William

a 3.604 GPA in the 2013–14 academic year, and the MT softball team produced a 3.299 GPA.

Middle Tennessee junior **Tiffany William** was selected as the 2014 Conference USA Women's Tennis Newcomer of the Year. The London, England, native is the first Blue Raider to win a C-USA Newcomer of the Year award.

The 2014 class of the Blue Raider Sports Hall of Fame features basketball standout **Kerry Hammonds Sr.**, track star **Micah Otis**, trailblazers **Jennifer Martinez** (softball) and **James Griffin** (football), and head coach **Larry Joe Inman** (women's basketball). The official induction ceremony will be held before the Oct. 4 football game against Southern Miss.

Middle Tennessee head track and field coach **Dean Hayes** received the Fred Russell Lifetime Achievement Award at the 16th Annual Pepsi Dinner of Champions in February.

Middle Tennessee senior left-handed pitcher **Zac Curtis** was selected in the

sixth round, 180th overall, by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the 2014 Major League Baseball Draft on June 6.

Senior **Shawn Jones** of the Middle Tennessee men's basketball team was named 2013–14 Conference USA Player of the Year, and **Ebony Rowe** was named C-USA Women's Basketball Player of the Year. For the first time in school history, the Blue Raiders won Player of the Year for both the men's and women's teams.

In May, the Middle Tennessee **Athletic Communications Office** was named one of the "Super 11" by the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA). The award went to the best sports information departments in the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision for the 2013 season.

In July, Conference USA announced that 11 of Middle Tennessee's 12 regular-season football games have been **selected for television** in 2014, with eight being part of the league package.

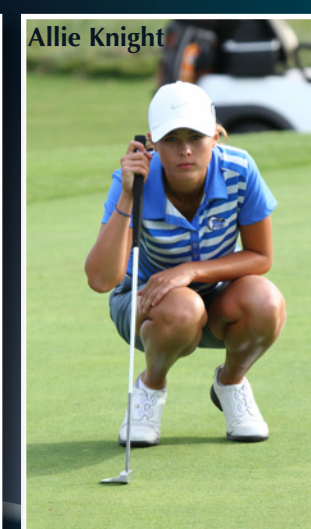
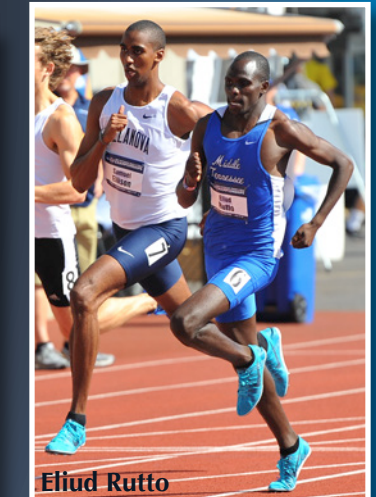
Middle Tennessee football's **Kevin Byard** and **T. T. Barber** were voted to Conference USA's 2014 preseason first team by the league's 13 head coaches.

Middle Tennessee golfer **Brett Patterson** was named Conference USA Men's Golf Scholar-Athlete of the Year. The McMinnville native boasts a perfect 4.0 GPA with a major in Business Administration.

For the sixth time in the last seven years, Middle Tennessee **men's golf** advanced to the NCAA Championships. The Blue Raiders were one

of 81 teams selected and 14 teams participating in regional competition at the Club at Old Hawthorne in Columbia, Missouri, May 15–17.

The men's outdoor track team finished 24th nationally, and **Eliud Rutto** and **Cordairo Golden** earned All-American honors.



GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Many are surprised to learn that one out of five degrees awarded at MTSU is a graduate degree. In fact, the College of Graduate Studies offers over 100 programs in the arts, sciences, education, and business. The reality is that MTSU is aggressively transitioning from a primarily undergraduate institution to a doctoral research university with significant research activity.



Jackie Eller

The College of Graduate Studies recently welcomed **Interim Dean and Vice Provost for Research Jackie Eller**. Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology since 2008 and a professor at MTSU for 29 years, Dr. Eller also directed graduate studies for her department for five years.

A three-year strategic plan has been implemented in the college, and several important graduate programs have been introduced or are in development. The new

Accelerated Bachelor's-to-Master's (ABM) program encourages eligible students to complete their bachelor's and master's degrees in five years. Seven programs have already been established, and more are in development:

- Actuarial Sciences M.S.
- Biostatistics M.S.
- Chemistry M.S.
- Economics M.A.
- Foreign Languages and Literatures M.A.T.
- Information Systems M.S.
- International Affairs M.A.

The **Master of Criminal Justice** program has been revised to include a nonthesis option to better address the needs of students in that discipline.

The **Master of Professional Studies** has added a concentration in Human Resource Leadership.

New programs are in the pipeline for approval by the Tennessee Board of Regents, including an **M.S. in Finance** and an **M.A. in Liberal Arts**.

New Letters of Intent have been developed for the following:

- Doctor of Nursing Practice
- Master of Library Science
- Master of Genetic Counseling



Major General Max Haston, MTSU graduate, visited campus during Senior Day activities, an Alumni Relations event that drew close to 400 students.

In addition, we have done the following to support our graduate programs:

- Increased **outreach to undergrads and alumni** through activities such as Grad Fair, Senior Day, Grad Open House, and Veterans Fair, improving visibility with our number-one feeder school
- Stepped-up efforts to reach out to adult working professional students through participation in industry and employee fairs, especially with the newly approved **Human Resource Leadership** concentration in the Master of Professional Studies program
- Enhanced military outreach, particularly with the **Tennessee National Guard**, addressing the particular educational needs of military personnel and their families
- Added an **immigration specialist** to our staff with the goal of enhancing our service and responsiveness to international students
- Raised the visibility of and enrollment in our **GRE and GMAT workshops**
- Adopted a **marketing plan** for 2014–15, including a year-round campaign on WPLN public radio and an upcoming social media campaign with *12th and Broad*, a new *Tennessean* outreach targeting the 24–40 Nashville market

On the research side, the **Office of Research Services (ORS)** continues to provide a broad range of support to faculty, staff, and students while carrying out its three-year strategic plan to increase the size, number, and quality of research proposals.

**ONE OUT OF FIVE DEGREES AWARDED AT
MTSU IS A GRADUATE DEGREE**

During FY 2014 the ORS accomplished the following:

- Provided support for submission of **195 proposals**, a 23% increase over FY 2013 and the **largest number of proposals submitted in one year at MTSU**.
- Managed **265 active grants and contracts** with no audit findings.
- Met proactively with new MTSU faculty and held group brainstorming sessions, resulting in a **fourfold increase** in proposals from untenured faculty. New tenure-track faculty members submitted 50% of the proposals requesting \$500,000 or more.
- Initiated new **collaborative projects** with nine Tennessee colleges and universities and Alabama A&M University and submitted over \$17 million in proposals.
- **Increased NSF funding** to \$2.8 million (five times the amount in 2013) and **NIH funding** to \$632,000 through new grant successes. Dr. Jason Jesson (Biology) received the largest NIH grant ever at MTSU—\$1.6 million.
- Solicited **invention disclosures**, resulting in nine provisional or utility patent applications and one issued patent.
- Increased **economic development and commercialization activity**, including an effort to develop Dr. Charles Perry's (Engineering Technology) hybrid car in Turkey. Participated in automotive manufacturing (one of 12 designated nationally by the Economic Development Administration) and interacted with state economic accelerators and LaunchTN.
- Awarded and administered **FRCAC** (31 faculty) and **URECA** (99 students) research and creative grants and partially funded startup packages for new faculty.

MTSU's commitment to research and to transforming students into scholars supports our goal of becoming the leader in research and graduate education in Tennessee.



Jason Jesson



Charles Perry

www.mtsu.edu/graduate/

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS:

MTSU was recognized last year by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as a top producer of Fulbright award winners. The Fulbright Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, is the government's flagship international exchange effort. MTSU was the only Tennessee college or university to earn the *Chronicle's* distinction.

Today's students simply must communicate across cultures effectively if they are to participate in the international workplace. At MTSU, internationalization of the student body is a priority. MTSU's international student enrollment has increased from

40
agreements

396 to 789 in five years, and the University placed 335 students in its study-abroad programs this summer. We have more than 40 exchange agreements with institutions around the world.

789
students

MTSU's strong connections with China in academic partnerships and research and industry collaborations rival any university in America.

Here are some other noteworthy facts about MTSU's international scope:

- International student undergraduate new enrollments increased 20.7% over the fall 2013 intake. New applications increased by 35%.

20%
increase

415
abroad

- For the first time, more than 400 MTSU students (415) went abroad during an academic year.
 - MTSU was selected as a member of UGRAD (sponsored by IIE, the International Institute of Education) and will enroll two sponsored students from Pakistan.
- MTSU was selected as a member of the Syrian Consortium and is cosponsoring two Syrian students who will enroll this fall.
- Three MTSU faculty members were visiting professors this summer at Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics under a partnership established by the Department of Aerospace and the Office of International Affairs.
- The University established and implemented 3+1+1 programs with two Chinese universities.



ATTENDANCE, MIDTERM GRADES/ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS, AND FINAL GRADING DATES

Continuing the new, streamlined practices established last fall, faculty will continue to

- report attendance in the first 14 days of the term (through census date) for all classes,
- report midterm grades for all undergraduate courses,
- report academic progress for monitored students (athletes only) in the later part of the term, and
- report an updated last date of attendance for all F's and incomplete grades.

Reporting attendance in the first 14 days allows intervention if needed to get students engaged in the class while there is still time for them to catch up and be successful. This replaces the first academic progress reporting requirement, which was focused on gathering this type of information. It will also allow Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs to make needed adjustments to reduce aid or benefits to stay in compliance with federal standards. The student is then notified well in advance of the financial impact of not attending class rather than at the end of the semester, when it's too late to re-engage and successfully complete the course.

Midterm grading is required for all undergraduate courses. It gives students important feedback, informs other parties on campus who can intervene and engage with students, and allows the encouragement of student to take advantage of the increased tutoring opportunities we have. While it is preferred that a grade is entered in the grade field, a comment regarding the student's progress will also fulfill this requirement. Midterm grading is now due a week earlier than before, as requested by the deans.

A few improvements have been made to the Academic Progress Report. Now, you may update attendance status and dates (attending, stopped, never) in the actual report without having to go to the attendance-reporting link or wait for entries to be manually updated. We have also added an "Advisor Follow-Up Requested" box that you can check if you want an advisor to contact a student and intervene.

Athletes only will be marked as monitored students during the final Academic Progress Reporting cycle. Keep in mind that the Academic Progress Reporting tool is available all semester long and students as well as advisors and others across campus can see and use this information.

Final grades of F and I require a last date of attendance. Any dates already populated will appear and can be updated; otherwise, dates need to be reported. November 15 will be the defined date for the fall; any last dates of attendance on November 15 or after will be removed, and the F will be considered earned and reported appropriately for financial aid. Any F with a date before November 15 will be reported as noncompletion of the course; the F will automatically be converted to an FA overnight before the grade rolls to academic history; and the time status and financial aid will be adjusted. While it is important to remove or adjust any incorrect attendance reporting so a student's time status and financial aid are appropriately adjusted on time, any students with a passing grade will automatically have any "stopped" or "never attended" status adjusted to "attending."

Please use reporting dates to ensure that your course is set up to meet these deadlines and supply helpful feedback to students and others on campus. Dates are included for full term and all the parts of term.

BUDGET AND SALARY OVERVIEW

The final state budget as proposed by Governor Haslam and approved by the General Assembly did not include any new state enhancement funds for improvements under the Tennessee Higher Education Commission Outcomes-Based Funding Formula. It did include adjustments to current base appropriations for higher education based strictly on performance. This resulted in some institutions receiving funding increases and others funding reductions.

MTSU was one of only two of the six Tennessee Board of Regents universities that received increased funds from the adjustment. All three University of Tennessee schools also received increases. Fiscal Year 2014–2015 is the first year after the full implementation of the THEC Outcomes-Based Funding Formula.

The new state budget for this fiscal year did not include any funding for cost-of-living increases for state employees, K–12 teachers, or higher education employees. Therefore, any salary increases have to be funded by the institution. Due to the minimal state appropriation increase and anticipated enrollment reduction, no compensation plan increase for MTSU was proposed to the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Faculty promotion increases and other promotion increases will, however, still be made.

The state budget for this fiscal year did include \$1,320,000 in one-time capital maintenance funds for a chiller and tower replacement project at MTSU. Also, the new budget again included funding to match eligible employees' deferrals in the 401(k) plan and for continued longevity payments.

Fall enrollment is expected to be down again this year. Because of that, there may be only minimal funds available for new initiatives. As a result, budget fund reallocations will be required to meet higher-priority needs. Some funding may be only one-time funding, not base, and will require an end-of-year review to see if continued funding is warranted. Base funding may also be moved from areas where needs have decreased because of reduced enrollment to areas of growth and to projects and initiatives needed to reverse declining enrollment and to support our student success initiatives.

In June, TBR approved 2014–2015 institutional and system office budgets. The budgets included tuition increases. MTSU was approved for a 5 percent

increase in tuition. This increase for MTSU will help fund some inflationary costs, the cost to open the new Science Building, faculty promotion salary increases, and some of the student success initiatives.

During its meeting, the board expressed heightened concern about continuing increases in tuition and fees and indicated a general desire to better understand actions taken by institutions to become more efficient.

MTSU leaders will meet with TBR leaders this fall to discuss budget development processes and other issues of interest. The goal is to communicate the successes, challenges, and needs of MTSU so TBR leaders can properly convey those matters to various stakeholders, including regents, legislators, and the state administration.

As you are probably aware, the governor has proposed a plan to allow Tennessee students to attend community colleges at no charge beginning in fall 2015. We anticipate this will effect our enrollment for the next few years, making it even more important that we retain and graduate the students we enroll.

FUNDRAISING

Over the past year, campus-wide fundraising efforts surpassed \$10 million and successfully garnered support for a number of critical projects and initiatives. This level of giving places MTSU among the top 10–15 percent of its national peers and further demonstrates the incredible support we continue to receive from our alumni and friends.

Scholarships and student support continue to be the number-one fundraising priority, directly driving our student success initiatives. Significant gifts were also secured last year for endowed faculty positions, the fine arts, athletics, and capital projects, including several naming gifts in support of the new Science Building.

With less than 18 months remaining in the Centennial Campaign, we are well positioned to reach and exceed our goal while providing important long-term resources to

strengthen many of our top overall priorities. One example of a gift made to the University during the ongoing Centennial Campaign is a corporate donation of \$15,000 from the southeast chapter of the International Beverage Packaging Association to endow scholarships for students in our new Mechatronics Engineering degree program.

An example of a mechatronic system is a surgical robot, which performs precision mechanical work under sophisticated electronic and sensory control. MTSU's push into mechatronics education promises to raise the Department of Engineering Technology to an even higher level of success.



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

A LEGEND'S LEGACY

Nancy Jones, the widow of country music icon George Jones, announced in April that the George Jones Scholarship Fund she recently established at MTSU had already raised more than \$171,000. Donations can be made online at www.MTSU.edu/georgejones, or by calling (615) 898-5595.



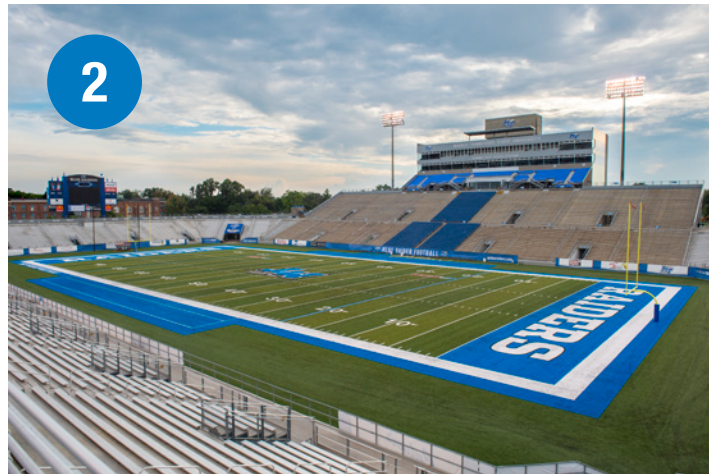
George and Nancy Jones

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

MTSU continues to be an exciting place to work and study, in large part because of so many renovations and the new buildings underway or opening for use. Here is a brief update on recent and current projects.

- 1 • **Science Building.** Move-in is substantially complete. The building is open for classes and labs this fall. (Please see the accompanying article in newsletter.)
- 2 • **Football field turf replacement.** This project is complete, and football practices have already taken place on the new field.
- 3 • **Student Services and Admissions Center/MT One Stop.** The new building was occupied this spring and is fully operational for the start of the fall semester.
 - **Murphy Center Renovation.** The project remains on schedule for completion before the start of the 2014–2015 basketball season.
- 4 • **Cope Administration Building.** The project is on schedule.
 - **McFarland Building Renovation.** The project is on schedule for completion by the end of 2014, and the building should be ready for occupancy for spring semester 2015.
- **LRC 101, College of Education Professional Development Center.** Construction will be completed and the center will be occupied this fall.
- **Bell Street Center Renovation.** Planned occupants include graduate studies for the Jennings A. Jones College of Business, the University College, and Counseling and Testing Services. There will also be garage and surface lighting improvements and new fencing around the green space. Construction is planned to begin this fall, and completion is scheduled for summer 2015.
- **Flight Simulator Building.** The project designed to house flight simulators for the Aerospace Department is scheduled to bid this fall.

- 5 • **Underground Electric.** The new Murfreesboro Electric Department substation on Rutherford Blvd. is nearing completion. The second electrical entrance to the campus will be energized this fall. This infrastructure work provides the additional flexibility and capacity needed to address present and future needs of the University.



TRUE BLUE RESPECT

True Blue Respect is a student-focused campaign that reinforces community standards. With the beginning of each new school year, it's important that we all be reminded of the elements of this campaign. Two of its standards involve the proper use of golf carts and our ongoing push to keep our campus clean and beautiful.

Golf Cart Etiquette

The start of fall classes brings an increase in traffic and more golf carts. Please remember the Environmental Health and Safety Committee's guidelines for proper golf cart use. Golf carts travel in areas frequented by thousands of pedestrians daily, and carts and people also share space with the growing number of bicyclists on campus. Golf cart safety guidelines seek to improve driver and passenger safety, prevent theft, and help preserve the landscape.

Anyone who is responsible for or drives an MTSU golf cart can check the Environmental Health and Safety website, www.mtsu.edu/ehs/, for instructions on complying with the golf cart guidelines. A map of preferred golf cart routes is also on the site.

Examples of the guidelines include the following:

- Drivers should travel on campus roadways and designated routes when possible.
- Drivers are to slow down or stop at blind intersections.
- Drivers are to drive carefully, be courteous, and yield to pedestrians.
- Passengers must ride in a passenger seat with limbs inside the cart.
- Keys must not be left in parked carts.
- Lock down the cart to protect it from theft.

Clean Campus Crew

Keeping our campus beautiful is a point of school pride for the Clean Campus Crew. These dedicated students are chosen to participate in a program that gives them a work-study opportunity including the waiver of some tuition and fees. The crew works in conjunction with Facilities Services, which maintains the grounds of the entire University. The Clean Campus Crew has helped significantly in removing unauthorized signage, which creates visual clutter and, eventually, litter. The willingness to spend time to help beautify our campus is an indication of school pride—or what we call “Respecting the Blue.”



DAILY DOUBLE

Jimmy Staten was selected in the fifth round of the 2014 NFL Draft by defending Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks. Staten found out during his graduation ceremony in May. He was given a rousing ovation from the crowd. Other Blue Raiders invited to NFL camps this summer included Sammy Seamster and Kenneth Gilstrap (Ravens), Logan Kilgore (Saints), and Josh Walker (Colts).

SUCCESS STARTS HERE

Timecia Terry, a recent graduate who interned this spring with state senator Jim Tracy, (R-Shelbyville), was among 13 MTSU students who worked as legislative interns during the most recent session of the Tennessee General Assembly. Mark Byrnes, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said the internships provide students hands-on experience in legislative matters from bill analysis to constituent concerns, research, and general office work. The University funds internships for students serving the Rutherford County legislative delegation. Students can also compete for spots assisting other lawmakers and committees through the broader state legislative internship program. Sen. Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro) was so impressed with intern Sara Mejia-Gomez that he asked her to help in the research for his proposal to study the feasibility of a monorail from Murfreesboro to Nashville. Ketron later hired Mejia-Gomez to work in his private business in Murfreesboro after graduation.



Sara Mejia-Gomez

A PUBLIC-SERVICE STANDOUT

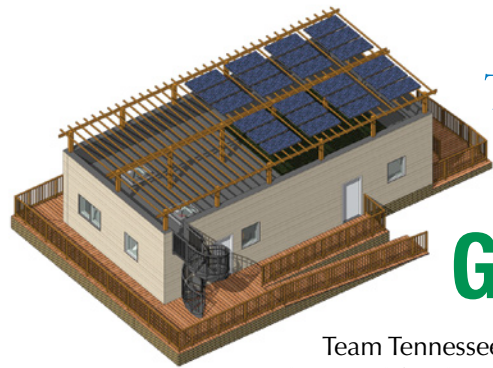
Honors student Tandra Martin was selected as a recipient of the 2014 Harold Love Outstanding Community Involvement Award. She is one of only five students and five faculty or staff members in the entire Tennessee Higher Education system selected to receive a \$1,000 award in recognition of significant public service. Tandra's father is Terry Martin, who works for MTSU in Printing Services. A Buchanan Scholar majoring in International Relations, Tandra recently studied abroad in Costa Rica and Israel. Martin is currently preparing to spend a year in Morocco after winning a David L. Boren Scholarship sponsored by the National Security Education Program.



Tandra Martin

HYBRID THINKERS

MTSU has partnered with Meliksah University and Firat University in Turkey to further develop Dr. Charles Perry's retrofit wheel-hub motor, which converts a standard gasoline-powered vehicle into a plug-in hybrid with just a minor alteration to the rear wheel hub, cutting a vehicle's fuel consumption by half or more. Turkey is like the Detroit of Europe. Many European automobile companies manufacture cars there, and because of the high price of gasoline, people in the region are already spending \$1,000 to retrofit their cars to use cheaper fuels.



TRUE BLUE TEAM GREEN

Team Tennessee, composed of students and faculty in MTSU's College of Basic and Applied Sciences and College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, the School of Engineering at Vanderbilt, and partners from Habitat Nashville, was selected to compete in Solar Decathlon 2015, a U.S. Department of Energy event that challenges students to design and build a functioning, energy-efficient, solar-powered house. Twenty teams from colleges and universities across the world have started the nearly two-year process of building their houses. Students in Construction Management, Interior Design, and Engineering Technology will be involved in work leading to the building of a house on the Vanderbilt campus that is less than 1,000 square feet. The Solar Decathlon comprises 10 contests designed to gauge how well the houses are built and how livable and affordable they are.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY 2014 Charitable Giving Campaign



Arms Around the Community

#trueGIVER

www.mtsu.edu/givemtsu



0714-0992 - MTSU is an AA/EEO employer.

Connection Point

During the eleven CUSTOMS orientation sessions that occurred this summer, staff from the Division of Student Affairs has been talking with students about the Connection Point program, and specifically about this year's newest addition—rewards!

We know that the first six weeks of the semester are critically important for student success. Students need to connect academically in the classroom and socially outside the classroom to feel like they belong at MTSU. That's why all our students, especially freshmen, are being asked to attend a variety of events and activities during the first six weeks of the semester where they can receive participation points that can be redeemed for various rewards. Students are being asked to bring their Blue IDs with them to the events so Student Affairs staff can swipe their cards and record their involvement. Students who are not connecting with the campus community will be contacted to find out how we can get them to become more involved. You can learn more about the Connection Point program at www.mtsu.edu/connection.

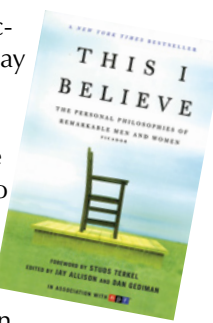
Changes to Convocation

Because of Murphy Center renovations, Convocation as we have known it will move, but for this year only. Opening Night ceremonies will take place Saturday, Aug. 23, at 5:30 p.m. in Floyd Stadium followed immediately by the annual President's Picnic on the west concourse of the football and on the plaza outside Gate 3.

While this year's event will be decidedly less formal with the absence of academic regalia, the event will still showcase our commitment to welcoming our newest students to and letting them see what it means to be True Blue!

Summer Reading

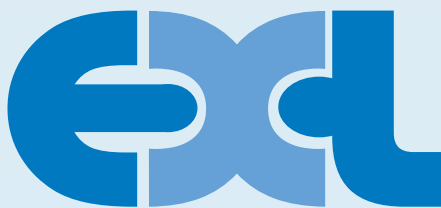
This year's summer reading selection is *This I Believe*, edited by Jay Allison and Dan Gediman. Mr. Allison is the Opening Night keynote speaker. Based on the popular National Public Radio series of the same name, the book features 80 different statements of individual beliefs from both the well known and unknown.



STUDENT SUCCESS

continued from page 5

working in tandem with professors will have a cumulative effect within the colleges. As experts in their disciplines, faculty members will continue to provide essential advice about courses, academic programs, and career and graduate school possibilities. College-based advisors will support the faculty but also take a more proactive and real-time approach to students who are struggling. Using a new software package the University is adopting, college advisors will be able to reach out to students who might be having trouble academically as identified through instructor alerts or the predictive analytics function of the software. Other universities have seen great results from similar, more proactive methods of advising.



EXL. The Experiential Learning Program has demonstrated promise as a means to increase engagement with a corresponding increase in retention. The program gives students an opportunity to gain practical experience in a real-world environment related to their academic learning. The six-year graduation rate for students taking EXL courses is 86%—well above the average.

Course Redesign. We have launched a mammoth effort in recent years to change how we structure and deliver some General Education courses in which too many students were failing. With much effort and painstaking faculty review, these courses have been redesigned in an effort to increase attendance, engagement, and eventual success. Courses that have higher-than-average numbers of D, F, and W results are

being reexamined and potentially redesigned to encourage student engagement and increase retention. Consideration will be given to all aspects of these courses. One example



of course redesign from the College of Basic and Applied Sciences involves the Geosciences Department's "flipping" of classrooms for some Introduction to Earth Science sections. A flipped classroom offers a form of blended learning in which students learn new content online by watching video lectures, usually at home, and doing what used to be homework (assigned problems) in class, with teachers offering more personalized guidance and interaction and less lecturing.

Scholars Academy. Seven years ago, the Scholar's Academy was developed to attract and acclimate qualified low-income, Pell-eligible students to the University and equip them for success. Historically, the program enrolled a small group of students (32 or less) and gave them an opportunity to earn six credit hours, learn success strategies, become acclimated to college life, and develop a network of peers. This summer, the program experienced a whopping increase of eighty participants (a 356% increase) for a total of 114. These students will continue to meet with student-success staff during the spring and fall semesters to strengthen both their academic and social connections. They will participate in workshops that will include such topics as note-taking techniques, how to study for midterm and final exams, financial literacy, and how to build a personal winning team.

Midterm Grades. The midterm grade initiative ensures that students know where they stand academically when they most need to know it and can receive appropriate updates and feedback from their professors. The participation of our faculty in this initiative is critical to the overall success of our students. In its first year of implementation, the program had 100% participation in the spring 2014 term.

Tutoring. The tutoring spot located in the Walker Library, in concert with other Tutoring Spots located in the departments, provides free supplemental instruction opportunities to help all MTSU students as they strive for success.



Sophomore Engagement. While the freshman-year experience has received a great deal of attention, research indicates that many second-year students feel a sense of abandonment, which can result in student attrition. Increasing student involvement in campus life and academic programs is one of the keys to retention on which we are very focused.

JANSPORT. CUSTOMS 2013 Molly McCormack SGA



Undeclared/General Areas of Interest. Recent mandates by the Tennessee Board of Regents require us to modify how we deal with students who are not ready to select a particular major. Such students now receive extensive advising support.

Career Development. While emphasis has been placed on increasing graduation and retention, we must also consider ways to ensure that our students graduate with the necessary skills to get a job and a realistic understanding of the job market. University College is piloting a new approach encouraging students to identify preferred career choices and use those choices to identify an appropriate major. Initial feedback has been very positive.

Alternative Degree Options. Many students change majors numerous times during their college careers, or they are faced with candidacy issues and are forced to make changes. Often, credit hours earned in one major can't be applied to others, resulting in lost time and money. In fall 2013, the revised Bachelor of Science in Integrated Studies degree (formerly the Bachelor of University Studies degree) was launched with the specific goal of providing a valuable option to make use of these potentially "lost hours."

Recapture of Previously Enrolled Students. Work responsibilities, family issues, and financial problems often cause students to delay enrollment until it is too late and semesters are missed. Advisors have been asked to call all previously enrolled students who have yet to register for classes in the upcoming semester. This is an opportunity to encourage them to stay on track and deal with issues that might be hindering them.

In conclusion, colleagues and friends, I exhort you all:

Let us boldly and resolutely continue our Quest for Student Success!

True Blue!



TOBACCO FREE

I am constantly reminding our campus community that compliance with our tobacco-free policy is not optional and that there are consequences for violations. Students in violation will be referred to Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services. Disciplinary sanctions range from warnings or reprimands to suspension or expulsion for the most egregious instances of noncompliance. Faculty and staff who fail to comply will be reported to their supervisors for discipline. Consequences ranging from warnings to unsatisfactory job performance ratings (which will result in denial of any across-the-board state salary increase) will be imposed.

Let me stress that e-cigarettes are included in the tobacco-free campus ban!

We have come a long way in a short time with the effort to stamp out smoking on our campus. I am very proud of the progress we've made, and I thank all of you for your response to this matter. Nevertheless, with the beginning of each semester, a time when we have many new students on campus, I think a gentle reminder of the policy is necessary.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIVISION

One important IT project taking shape at MTSU truly highlights our collective focus on student success. The Student Success Collaborative is a software solution created by the Education Advisory Board, one of the largest research and consulting firms specializing in nonprofit organizations (including colleges and universities) in the world. This system will be used by advisors to help anticipate courses and majors in which a student may have a particularly high need for intervention and guidance. The software also helps identify financial risk.

Some of the benefits of this approach are as follows:

- This system will be the repository for notes taken by advisors regarding meetings and other contacts they have with students.
- Data analytics and predictive modeling are used to identify students at risk and uncover obstacles to degree completion. This is based on an analysis of 10 years of MTSU student data and is customized for MTSU.
- The system will automatically flag issues regarding degree completion progress.
- Through the use of these tools, data mining and best practices will be employed to identify and then eliminate obstacles to degree progress.
- The system will provide executive dashboards that can be used to track progress against defined goals.
- Using data analytics, we will be able to (1) identify the courses most critical to complete early in the student's career and what level of achievement is expected in those courses, (2) identify and flag students who withdraw or don't register for critical courses, (3) help create and maintain momentum to reach upper-division status, (4) identify problems early and take corrective action, and (5) target and fix degree bottlenecks.
- The system will also help identify majors that may be very difficult for the student so that extra help and attention can be given during the toughest times in the major. If the risk of completing the major is identified as extremely high, a "major matcher" function will enable the advisor to suggest alternatives that may pose less risk and improve chances for success. There is nothing wrong with a student being challenged while in pursuit of a degree! We don't necessarily want to guide a student toward the easiest academic path! However, we do want to help the student make a choice that has manageable risk, high satisfaction, and maximum career potential!

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The declaration "I am True Blue" is more than just a marketing phrase. Each time these words are repeated, they underscore our core values of honesty and integrity; respect for diversity; engagement in the community; and our commitment to reason, not violence.

I was reminded of the True Blue pledge when I first heard about a new White House Task Force (www.notalone.com) created to protect students from sexual assault on college and university campuses nationwide. Launched in January 2014, the task force represents a first-of-its-kind coordinated federal response to campus rape intended to make sure that colleges comply with sexual harassment/sexual violence laws, and develop effective policies to do so.

MTSU is committed to ensuring that all students feel safe and have the opportunity to benefit fully from our educational programs and activities. We are likewise committed to ensuring that all employees work in an environment

assault, sexual battery, and sexual coercion.

In meeting this commitment, we have a reporting and investigative structure that allows us to act quickly and decisively when we become aware of complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual violence. If you have knowledge of any such complaints, you are required to contact a Title IX coordinator or deputy coordinator. Contact information, along with details about our reporting and investigative structure, can be found at www.mtsu.edu/titleix.

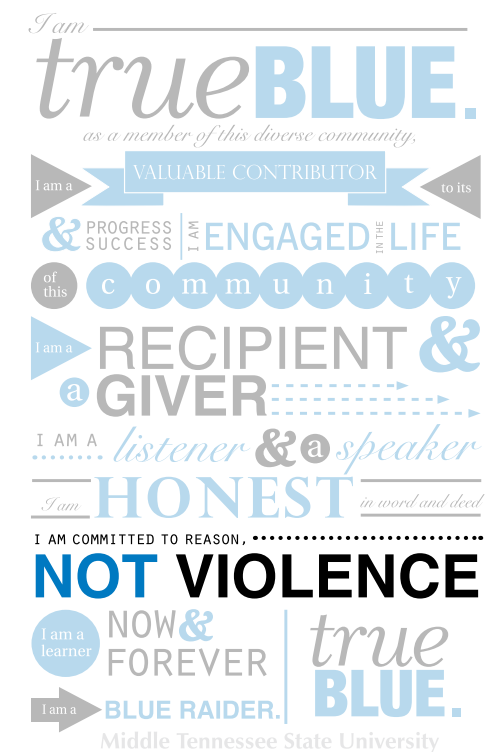
Faculty and staff need to understand that **they can be found personally liable** if they don't live up to their responsibility to report incidences of sexual assault or sexual harassment they see or hear about. Responsible employees who fail to make a required report are subject to disciplinary action. I cannot stress enough what an important issue this is to our community. If you know about

I cannot stress enough what an important issue this is to our community. If you know about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, report it.

free of all forms of sex discrimination. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is a law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex under any education program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. Sex discrimination can encompass sexual harassment and sexual violence. Sexual violence means a physical sexual act perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent. It can include rape, sexual

an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, report it.

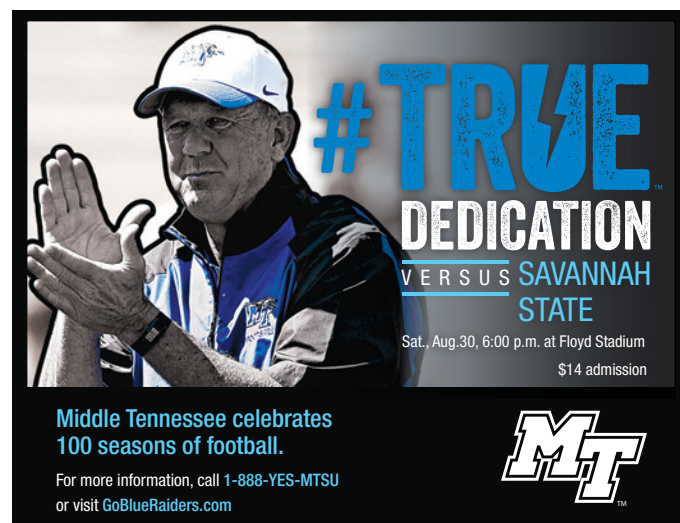
In truth, the role of the bystander could be the crucial component in eradicating sexual violence on college campuses. Confronting sexual violence, or perhaps just cleverly diffusing a potential situation by intervening in some way, shape, or form, could stop a sexual assault. In the same way that the designated driver campaign has significantly reduced



drunk driving deaths, educating bystanders to do something when they see a potential sexual assault occurring or about to occur could have a similar impact. Training and educational opportunities are available through MTSU. Visit www.mtsu.edu/sexual-violence for more information, and look for additional training and educational opportunities during the year.

As a campus community, this is just another way we show that we are "True Blue": by looking out for each other and taking care of one another. At MTSU, we are proud of our reputation for tolerance and inclusiveness, especially regarding gender issues and aspects of personal choice.

As we start another new semester, I am asking you to be vigilant in protecting all the True Blue members of our community from sexual harassment and violence!



ONE STOP MAKES IT EASY!

The opening of MT One Stop on March 10 in the new Student Services and Admissions Center gave students ONE place to go for assistance with financial aid, billing questions, transcript requests, registration assistance, and all enrollment management functions.

This past summer, MT One Stop staff assisted nearly 400 students daily and fielded a high of 1,400 calls per day. The staff answers approximately 150 emails per day. Through MT One Stop, every student has an assigned enrollment counselor to help with the recruitment process, orientation, and enrollment and to serve as a knowledgeable resource all the way through graduation!

The \$16 million Student Services and Admissions Center is the latest example of the University's emphasis on student success and its focus on keeping students enrolled and on track to graduate. The 58,000-square-foot building is connected by a walking bridge to the Student Union and houses everything related to admissions, records and enrollment, financial aid, scheduling, and the Bursar's Office. One location for all these services is a new experience for students, who previously

had to go to several different offices spread out over campus to handle some of their most pressing concerns. The combination of a new building and the revamping of the University's service model for enrollment management has significantly decreased frustration and allowed students to sharpen their focus on academic achievement. The goal is to remove barriers and make being enrolled at MTSU easier and more convenient.

The design of the building and the concept behind MT One Stop are perfectly aligned with the Complete College Tennessee Act, which requires state appropriations to be based on retention and graduation rates, not enrollment. This new approach to providing personal, comprehensive, and coordinated enrollment services is also in step with Gov. Haslam's Drive to 55 initiative, aimed at raising the number of Tennesseans with college degrees or certifications to 55 percent by 2025.

MTSU is determined to offer students every opportunity to succeed.

True Blue!



PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

Last year, MTSU opened two new **student parking garages**. The four-level structures (valued at \$23.5 million) added almost 1,000 net parking spaces near the campus core.

We have also added **768 new commuter parking spaces** near the Health, Wellness, and Recreation Center. The Softball Lot, as we've named it, gives commuting students access to more parking closer to the center of campus and will provide much-needed additional parking for visitors to the Rec Center. This lot is now ready for use.

Lightning Way, which connects the rotaries on Champion Way and Blue Raider Drive, will be open for traffic beginning this fall. Landscape work, lane markings, and final touches will continue into the fall.

Parking and shuttle route changes for fall 2014 are small but significant:

- We have moved to a simpler **three-tiered parking system**: white permits for faculty and staff, red permits for campus residents, and green permits for commuter stu-



dents. Everyone should familiarize themselves with these changes and park accordingly.

- Construction on Champion Way and Lightning Way is done, and **two new shuttle stops** have been added. We encourage you to **download the bus app** from the MTSU website so you can easily track the location of the shuttle you need and estimate its arrival time at your stop.

LOOKING EAST



MTSU signed various agreements with universities in China this spring.

The partnership with **Hangzhou Normal University** for a **Confucius Institute** at MTSU was granted a five-year extension. The institute is sponsored by China's Education Ministry to promote Chinese language, history, and culture through tours, exchanges, and academic partnerships. MTSU joined Hangzhou Normal to open the institute in 2010.

Another pact will allow select juniors from China's top communication university to complete their bachelor's degree studies in Murfreesboro and then earn master's degrees from MTSU in one year. The agreement aligns MTSU's acclaimed College of Mass Communication with **Communication University of China**, known as the cradle of China's broadcasting and television talents.

MTSU gained an international partner with expertise in mechatronics engineering through a pact signed with **Shanghai Second Polytechnic University** (SSPU) enabling student and faculty exchanges and joint research projects.

SSPU specializes in energy generation and manufacturing motor vehicles and aircraft. MTSU recently launched a Mechatronics Engineering degree program.

An agreement with **Xiangnan University** in Chenzhou, which specializes in teacher training and medical sciences, will also allow student and faculty exchanges.

Last, MTSU signed an agreement with **Shaanxi Normal University** (SNU) in Xi'an, home of some of China's top cultural sites including the archaeological dig of terra-cotta warriors at the mausoleum of the first Qin emperor. Both universities began as teacher training schools and remain committed to that mission. SNU was among three hosts for a group of Rutherford County schoolchildren and parents visiting China in July as part of a Confucius Institute cultural exchange.



Left: Listening to questions from students at Shanghai Second Polytechnic University after my May 22 lecture on the American higher education system. Below: Touring one of Shanghai Second Polytechnic University's engineering laboratories.

CAPITOL PRAISE

I was very grateful to be honored in April by the Tennessee State Senate for our collective efforts to expand and strengthen the University's international partnerships and educational outreach. Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey welcomed me and my wife, Elizabeth, to the Senate chambers for the reading of a resolution by state senator and alumnus Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro), pictured below.



HELPING HAND

Many MTSU students are first-generation college students juggling academic and work demands in pursuit of a degree. For many, a relatively small financial setback—say, an emergency room visit or unexpected car repair—can delay their studies and impede progress toward a degree.

As another example of MTSU's focus on student success, those who find themselves in a financial pinch can now apply for one-time emergency microgrants aimed at keeping them in school and on track to graduate.

If you become aware of a student who might benefit from this type of support, encourage them to contact their college advisor or the dean's office in the college of their major to obtain additional information regarding the microgrant.

The College of Education has gone further and created its own microgrant program called ASPIRE. So far, the college has disbursed \$2,430 to teacher candidates from a total of \$3,195 in donations to the ASPIRE fund. The college also awarded all of its allotted University microgrants.

One benefactor was senior Jordan Raines-Ownby, who has four children. Also, her niece and nephew live with Jordan and her husband. Not long ago, Jordan strongly considered dropping out of school, delaying her graduation, and getting a full-time job to help with the cost of raising six children. The staff of the College of Education helped Jordan acquire a microgrant that kept her on track to becoming a schoolteacher. The college also put her in touch with a number of other local programs that help students.

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Contribute to the microgrant fund at www.mtsu.edu/StudentFund. More information is at mtsu.edu/student-success/crisis-aid.php.



MTSU Arts

The College of Liberal Arts celebrated another successful MTSU Arts season in 2013–2014. A big highlight was a presentation of the award-winning *Les Misérables*, which made school history by selling out four consecutive shows in the recently enlarged Tucker Theatre. The show's production was led by director Kristi Shamburger, assistant professor in the Department of Speech and Theatre, and musical director Raphael Bundage, professor and director of choral activities in the School of Music.

Community awareness and support continues to grow for MTSU Arts events. Ascend Federal Credit Union became the first-ever presenting sponsor and is planning to continue its partnership in the coming season. MTSU Arts certainly provides year-round entertainment for the entire area to enjoy.

The 2014–2015 season will kick off with a patron reception in Todd Art Gallery on September 11 beginning at 6:00 p.m. I am humbled to announce that this reception will feature my own photo exhibit, *China through the Eyes of an American University President*. We invite the entire University community to attend the reception or to just stop by and visit the exhibit between September 10 and 12.

Tucker Theatre will begin its fall season with a production of *Tall Tales*, September 24–28. The School of Music's Jazz Artist Series will feature "A Tribute to Illinois Jacquet" on October 20. For a full list of 2014–2015 MTSU Arts events, visit the calendar at www.mtsuarts.com.

Let me encourage you to join the MTSU Arts Patron Society, which offers various opportunities to enjoy special events, exhibits, and performances. To learn more, visit www.mtsuarts.com and click on the Patron Society tab at left. Membership in the society grew by 49 percent in 2013–2014. In addition, more than \$18,000 was raised for the art, dance, music, and theatre disciplines in the college.

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