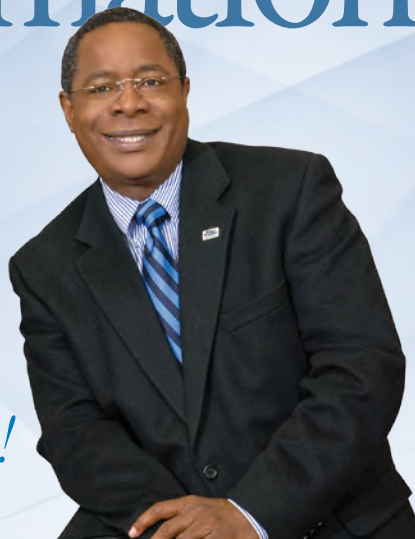


# NEWS & information

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Sidney A. McPhee  
*Welcome to the  
Fall 2015 Semester!*



As always, I appreciate all you do to support the goals and objectives of our great University.

In this newsletter, I want to highlight just a few achievements from this past year and provide some information on some of our plans for the future.

I welcome your feedback and comments. Please contact me at [Sidney.McPhee@mtsu.edu](mailto:Sidney.McPhee@mtsu.edu).

I also invite you to check out "The President's Post" at [www.mtsu.edu/President](http://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](https://twitter.com/PresidentMcPhee).

True Blue!

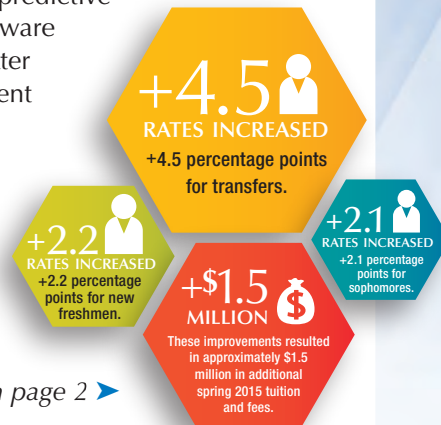
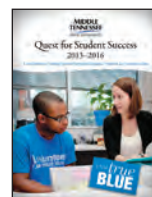
DR. SIDNEY A. MCPHEE

## HITTING OUR STRIDE

As we all know by now, Tennessee's new funding model for higher education places the highest priority on student progress, matriculation, and graduation success. Gov. Bill Haslam's Drive to 55 initiative seeks to improve Tennessee's workforce by increasing the percentage of Tennesseans with postsecondary degrees or certificates to 55 percent.

Last academic year, we made great strides in helping our students stay enrolled and on a clear path to earning a degree. Our achievements can be largely attributed to our ambitious **Quest for Student Success**, which has proven to be an effective roadmap in the effort to improve retention and graduation.

Within the first six months of implementing just two key components of the **Quest**—a new advising model and use of a predictive analytics software system to better monitor student progress—significant increases in persistence were measured:



continued on page 2 ►

Fiscal Year 2015–2016  
Budget Overview 3

A+ Science Project 7

MTSU Arts 8

MT Athletics 10

Alumni and Homecoming 12

Information Technology 14

Student Life and Convocation 15

Construction Update 16

Fundraising 18

Printing Services 18

Reaccreditation Update 19

True Blue Respect 20

Veterans and Military Families 21

Admissions 22

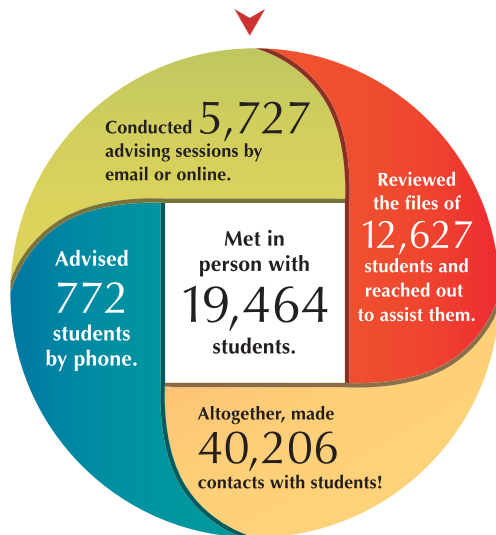
MidPoints 23

Graduate Studies 28

## HITTING OUR STRIDE *continued from page 1*

- Persistence rates increased by +2.2 percentage points for new freshmen.
- Rates increased +4.5 percentage points for transfers.
- Rates increased +2.1 percentage points for sophomores.
- These improvements resulted in approximately \$1.5 million in additional spring 2015 tuition and fees.

*From October 29, 2014, through  
April 30, 2015—the first  
six months of the sSSC's use—  
academic advisors*



The near future also looks bright. Although official data will not be available until census on September 7, 2015, trend projections have consistently indicated that MTSU will achieve record or near-record retention increases in the upcoming semester for first-time freshmen, new transfer students, and sophomore students.

The **Quest** is helping redefine and refocus our efforts and investments in recruitment, advising, and classroom teaching to better meet the needs of our students. With broad support from the University's central administrative team, led by Provost Brad Bartel and under the direction of Dr. Rick Sluder, vice provost for student success, and the leadership of the academic deans, department chairs, and faculty, our plan has shown tangible progress.

Driving those increases are a number of specific initiatives:

- The **redesign of more than 20 courses** has enhanced the learning environment for students, enabling them to better master the material and offering a greater chance for success. By the close of the fall 2015 semester, 28 courses will have been through some form of redesign. Eleven of MTSU's top 12 most predictive and most enrolled courses will have been redesigned.
- The **recent hiring of 47 new college-based academic advisors** has greatly enhanced our ability to effectively address critical advising and academic support needs.

- The use of new **predictive analytics software** has helped us sharpen our focus on areas that have the greatest opportunity to positively affect academic needs and achieve measurable, sustainable results. From October 29, 2014, through April 30, 2015—the first six months of the system's use—academic advisors
  - ▶ met in person with 19,464 students,
  - ▶ conducted 5,727 advising sessions by email or online,
  - ▶ advised 772 students by phone,
  - ▶ reviewed the files of 12,627 students and reached out to assist them, and
  - ▶ altogether, made 40,206 contacts with students!

I am proud to say these early successes have not gone unnoticed. An article in the March 13 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* says that MTSU is at the forefront nationally of efforts to improve retention and graduation, and many of the programs we are implementing are being adopted by institutions around the country (See page 4). MTSU's student success efforts were also pointed out in the *Washington Post* on June 14, 2015. And most recently, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities named MTSU one of five finalists nationally for its Project Degree Completion Award recognizing institutions that employ innovative approaches to improve retention and degree completion.

We have long said that we are a student-centered institution, and I am pleased that our actions are validating that for students and our peers. But with this recognition it's critical that we not rest on our laurels. There remains much to be done. Looking forward to the 2015–16 academic year, in addition to the previously mentioned efforts underway, there are a number of other activities we are launching:

- A total of **twenty-eight (28) Raider Learning Communities** are offered in fall 2015. Students in RLCs attend paired courses where instructors create collaborative learning experiences to not only magnify student learning, but also allow them to build personal and professional networks.
- Our highly successful **Scholars Academy** will be expanded to serve greater numbers of first-generation and/or at-risk students as they prepare for college.
- To continue to improve sophomore retention, a **Second-Year Experience** program has been developed.
- Restructuring our financial aid program to provide better incentives and support for students who make sustained progress toward completing their degree.
- Initiating a new program called **Rebound**, which provides academic support and assistance in retaining freshmen who had below a 2.0 at the end of the fall 2014 semester. For example, a Finish Line Scholarship has been developed for new freshmen and transfer students that will reward students who stay on track to finish their degrees by taking an average of 15 hours each semester.

*continued on page 27* ▶

## FISCAL YEAR 2015–2016 BUDGET OVERVIEW

The final state budget as proposed by Gov. Bill Haslam and approved by the General Assembly included a reduction adjustment in state funding for MTSU under the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Outcomes-Based Funding Formula and additional enhancement funds for improvements under the formula. The net effect was a small state appropriation increase for our **University**.

The new budget for this fiscal year also included funds for higher education **employee salary increases** that would equate to a 1.5 percent salary pool. As in previous years, the state appropriation will not fully fund higher education salary increases—meaning institutions themselves will be required to fund a portion of the increase. At the June quarterly meeting of the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), a tuition increase was approved to fund the institutions' portion of the 1.5 percent salary pool plus more funds to increase the pool to 2 percent.

The state budget also included capital maintenance funds for MTSU for Central Plant controls updates.

The TBR approved a 3.1 percent **tuition increase** for MTSU. New funds from this increase will cover certain

inflationary costs and the University's portion of the salary increase and provide funds for faculty promotion salary increases and efforts to ensure that facilities, technology, and resources are available to support student success.

In June, the TBR also approved a system compensation strategy that institutions will use to submit proposed salary increases from the 2 percent salary pool for consideration by the board at its September quarterly meeting. We have proposed to TBR a **cost-of-living-adjustment strategy** for an across-the-board salary increase for eligible MTSU employees using the two percent pool of funds.

The salary increase will be distributed to all unrestricted and restricted regular full-time and part-time benefit-eligible employees and participants in the postretirement service program on the payroll as of June 30, 2015.



*continued on page 7 >*

GRADUATE  
IN **4** AND  
GET **MORE**

MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE  
STATE UNIVERSITY

MTSU.edu/apply

Hope Scholarship Increase

Guaranteed Scholarships for Transfers

Finish Line Scholarship

I AM trueBLUE

# THE CHRONICLE

of Higher Education®

[chronicle.com](http://chronicle.com)

March 13, 2015  
Volume LXI, Number 26

## Spotlight on Retention

Students can't graduate if they don't return

By ERIC HOOVER



*Ariel Blackwell (right), a student at Middle Tennessee State, meets with her adviser, Trever Thomas. The university set aside \$3-million to hire 47 new academic advisers, with the goal of doing a better job of engaging students.*

**S**O FAR NOBODY'S PATENTED a Retain-O-Matic, a surefire, off-the-shelf strategy for increasing the number of students who stay enrolled. Until that happens, improving your college's graduation rate will require campuswide planning and commitment, the willingness to rethink approaches to an age-old problem.

Attrition is rampant. Nationally, only 58 percent of all first-time students who started a two- or four-year college in fall 2012 returned to the same institution the following year, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. And 69 percent returned to any U.S. college. That's a ton of missed opportunities—and lost tuition revenue.

Although keeping students on track has always been a challenge, the stakes are getting higher. Demographic shifts are bringing more first-generation students, with

**“New-school advising is using predictive analytics to target a specific group.”**

many needs, through higher education's gates. Tight budgets and enrollment shortfalls have stretched many campuses thin. Meanwhile, accountability measures and performance-based funding are intensifying concerns about retention rates, which haven't budged for decades.

So colleges are adopting more-sophisticated blueprints for student success. Some are embracing big data, using predictive models to identify those who are likely to struggle. Many have beefed up advising and support services. And various campuses are redesigning key courses

in hopes of getting more students to the finish line.

Trine University, in Indiana, has made customer service a priority. “This is the cell-phone-service generation—if you're not happy, switch your provider,” says Stuart D. Jones, vice president for enrollment management. “So today it's all about meeting students' needs and doing it quickly.”

To that end, Trine's robust early-alert system allows faculty, staff, and coaches to submit online reports about a student who may need help. Maybe she's missed two classes in a row, or she's struggling in math, or her mother's just been diagnosed with cancer. Each alert goes to a student-success team, which chooses the best person to contact the student, usually within 24 hours.

“We can't solve all problems, but we don't want students to suffer in silence,” Mr. Jones says. “That's why a lot of universities lose students—they just aren't aware of who's suffering.”

By the time problems surface, it can be too late. So Trine started a mentoring program last year, based on freshmen's academic records or financial burdens, for those who are likely to struggle. The university assigns each one to a faculty or staff member, who typically meets with the student once a week for a chat.

Mr. Jones believes the program helped nudge fall-to-spring retention up by two percentage points this year. “There's nothing wrong with being a little intrusive in a

student's life,” he says. “They expect it.”

Middle Tennessee State University started its new Quest for Student Success initiative to complement Gov. Bill Haslam's goal of significantly increasing the number of Tennesseans with college credentials by 2025. The university set aside \$3-million to hire 47 new academic advisers, more than doubling their number. Their charge: to engage students more proactively and efficiently.

“Old-school advising is about who appears in front of you—it's very limited,” says Richard D. Sluder, vice provost for student success. “New-school advising is using predictive analytics to target a specific group.”

How? Software from the Education Advisory Board, a research, technology, and consulting company, has helped the university identify students who are likely to hit a snag. The system is built on the finding that grades in specific courses, which vary from campus to campus, have great value in predicting who will graduate. (At Middle Tennessee State, for instance, 10 years' worth of historical data revealed that 78 percent of those who got an A in History 2020 later graduated, compared with just 60 percent of those who got a C.)

Such insights are helping advisers pick out students in the “murky middle,” with grade-point averages between 2.0 and 3.0, whose overall performance had not raised any red flags. The university then runs “campaigns,” selecting groups

## TAKEAWAY

### Retooling

- Colleges are helping academic advisers become more proactive while doing more to anticipate challenges that students may face, such as providing some first-year students with mentors.
- Instead of concentrating only on students who are most likely to struggle, colleges are mining their data to identify those in the “murky middle,” who might benefit from extra advising.
- Knowing your college's retention rate is important, but knowing how many students are making progress toward degrees—and why—is essential.

of students and directing them to more-focused advising sessions. Middle Tennessee State has also used the data to guide the redesign of its 10 most-predictive courses.

As of late February, fall-to-spring persistence rates are up 2.2 percentage points over last year for freshmen, 4.5 points for transfers, and 1 point for graduate students. That adds up to 459 students, Mr. Sluder says: "We're growing enrollment on the back of retention."

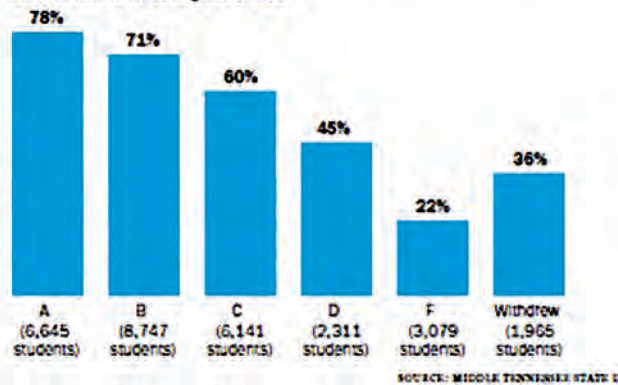
Amid all the discussions of student success, it's important to remember that a retention rate reveals only so much. DePaul University confronted that fact about 10 years ago after reaching an important conclusion. "A focus on persistence was blinding us to the importance of degree completion," says David H. Kalsbeek, senior vice president for enrollment management and marketing.

The percentage of students who return for a second year has long been the standard metric by which colleges measure their success. Yet when DePaul officials analyzed their enrollment data, they found that while about four-fifths of incoming students were returning as sophomores the

## The Power of Prediction

By analyzing 10 years of data on nearly 29,000 students, Middle Tennessee State University determined the 10 courses that were most predictive of graduation. The findings have helped the university revamp academic advising and redesign key courses. Below are the graduation rates for students by the grade they earned in the most-predictive course, "Survey of United States History II."

Graduation rate for each grade earned



following fall, only about half were earning at least a 2.5 grade-point average and 48 credits (on a quarter system).

Because students who meet those academic thresholds are much more likely to graduate from DePaul than those who don't, Mr. Kalsbeek says retention rates were "masking" the main determinant of their long-term success. So the university redefined its goals, emphasizing progress-to-degree as a key metric.

It also revamped its strategies to better serve the needs of all students, not just those most likely to struggle.

In recent years, DePaul has pushed faculty members and advisers to emphasize the importance of first-year performance. The university created a degree-audit system that allows students to track their own progress. It has redesigned gateway courses in accounting, chemistry, and math, and urged faculty

members to give early assignments—and feedback. And it promotes summer sessions as a way to avoid scheduling jams, retake a course, or tackle an especially challenging subject. Its four-year completion rate has increased to nearly 60 percent, up from about 40 percent in 2000.

In short, retention is not the same as progress toward a degree. Also, many students who drop out do so after their second year.

No matter what a college does, its retention and completion rates are unlikely to increase sharply over the short term. After all, research shows that a college's defining features—its socioeconomic diversity and market position—largely determine a range of student outcomes.

It's crucial to set a realistic goal for your institution, Mr. Kalsbeek says. Trustees might ask why your completion rate can't be as high as that of the nearest superselective college, but such a comparison might set unrealistic expectations.

"There's a fine line," he says, "between having a vision and hallucinating." ■

## Healthy Ranking

**NurseJournal.org**, a social community website providing education resources for nurses and healthcare professionals, recently ranked the best nursing schools in each region of the United States. A total of **1,189 schools**



were measured according to 20 metrics in five categories: *quality, affordability, convenience, satisfaction, and value.*

**MTSU ranked 15th overall in the eastern region.** (Vanderbilt ranked 389; the University of Tennessee–Knoxville ranked 401; the University of Tennessee–Martin ranked 31; Austin Peay State University ranked 32; the University of Memphis ranked 35; the University of Tennessee–Chattanooga ranked 76; and Tennessee Tech ranked 465.)

This article did not appear in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

## BUDGET OVERVIEW *continued from page 3*

Each eligible employee will receive an increase equal to two percent of their June 30, 2015, salary or \$750, whichever is greater. The minimum payment will be prorated for part-time employees. These increases will not apply to adjunct faculty, temporary employees, graduate assistants, or student workers.

If approved by the TBR at its September quarterly meeting, increases will be effective in the October pay period but will include retroactive pay to July 1, 2015.

If grant funding is available, increases for grant employees will be charged to the appropriate grant; increases for auxiliary employees will come from auxiliary revenues.

The state legislation again provided funding to match eligible employees' deferrals in the **401(k) plan**, which

may be between \$20 and \$50 per month, and for **longevity payments** at \$100 per year of creditable service up to a maximum number of 30 years.

MTSU leadership will again meet with the TBR leadership this fall to discuss budget development processes and other issues of interest. The purpose is to communicate the successes, challenges, and needs of MTSU so board leadership can properly convey those matters to various stakeholders including regents, legislators, and state administrators. We will explain the steps taken to implement our student success programs to achieve the goals of the Complete College Tennessee Act, the Drive to 55 initiative, and the Tennessee Promise, which allows qualified students to attend community colleges free of charge beginning this fall. [MTSU](#)

## A+ SCIENCE PROJECT

Renovations to MTSU's older science buildings—Davis Science Hall and Wisner-Patten Science Building—are scheduled for completion by late fall 2016. Full occupancy is anticipated in January 2017, before the start of the spring semester.

A total of about \$20 million in state funds already allocated to the original Science Building are being used to complete the renovations, which will directly or indirectly benefit all 11 departments of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences (CBAS). The Department of Physics and Astronomy will significantly expand its footprint on floors of both buildings. Geosciences—the newest department in CBAS—will gain a new home. Formerly part of the College of Liberal Arts, it will relocate from Kirksey Old Main (KOM) to the second floor of Davis Science. This move offers another perk: Geosciences' departure from KOM will open space there for expansion of the Computer Science Department.

Academic programs outside CBAS also slated to occupy space in the renovated buildings are several from the College of Liberal Arts. Historical



***An artist's rendering shows the new connector for Davis Science and Wisner-Patten looking south from the Todd Building.***

Archaeology and Public History will share lab space with the Sociology and Anthropology Department. The Forensic Science program will relocate from Todd Hall to the first floor of Wisner-Patten. With it comes FIRE, the Forensic Institute for Research and Education. Remaining space in the renovated buildings includes spots for two highly regarded research centers: the Center for Environmental Education and the Center for Cedar Glade Studies, each of which is now in the Fairview Building.

The renovations are being made with student success in mind. Nearly 20

academic advisors working for CBAS now operate in cramped quarters in Keathley University Center. As part of the renovations, the first floor of Davis Science will house a new student-advising suite to provide easier access and offer greater privacy during meetings between advisors, students, and their parents. Collaborative learning is also a focus of the renovations, and the updated buildings will offer a more student-friendly environment than what exists now.

Historical aspects of the older buildings will be retained, but modern design *continued on page 9* ➤

# DUAL ENROLLMENT

The Dual Enrollment Grant program is funded by the Tennessee Lottery and administered by the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation. This program helps students begin working toward a college degree while pursuing a high school diploma and encourages postsecondary education and the acceleration of postsecondary attainment. The dual-



enrollment model is perfectly aligned with Gov. Bill Haslam's Drive to 55 initiative, which identifies earlier engagement by students as a key factor for raising the state's levels of educational attainment.

As of this writing, 500 were enrolled. We project that at least 550 students will be enrolled by the first day of classes.

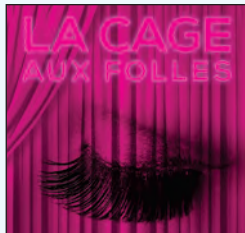
Here are some other highlights:

- Qualified high school juniors and seniors statewide will be able to take tuition-free online courses for college credit through the University's recently expanded program. The move follows a new emphasis on dual-enrollment outreach, which includes MTSU courses to be taught this fall on high school campuses in Rutherford, Williamson and Bradley counties.
- Last fall, MTSU became a partner in Blackman High School's new Collegiate Academy, offering college-level courses at the high school and helping develop academic enrichment programs. The agreement allows eligible Blackman juniors and seniors to take up to **six hours** of MTSU courses **at no cost**. Credits count on both high school and college transcripts. MTSU also makes certain programs, activities, and resources available to academy students, e.g., access to the new \$147-million Science Building, study-abroad programs, and campus events and lectures. [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)

# MTSU Arts

ART • DANCE • MUSIC • THEATRE

The College of Liberal Arts celebrated another successful MTSU Arts season, with over \$23,000 raised for performing and fine arts at MTSU. A big highlight of the 2014–2015 season was the spring production of the award-winning *La Cage aux Folles*, directed by Professor Deborah Anderson.



The 2015–2016 season will begin with a Patron Society reception October 29 at 6:30 p.m. A location will be announced soon. Immediately following the reception, the University community is invited to attend the School of Music's Jazz Artist Series, featuring trombonist, composer, and arranger Alan Ferber, at 7:30 p.m. in Hinton Hall, Wright Music Building.

Other notable fall events include the Todd Art Gallery's opening exhibit, *Still Life: The Art of Moonshine*, from August 27 to September 10, and the Department of Theatre and Dance's production of *Uncle Vanya* November 4–8. For a full list of fall 2015 MTSU Arts shows, exhibits, and performances, visit the calendar at [www.mtsuarts.com](http://www.mtsuarts.com).



Let me encourage each of you to join the MTSU Arts Patrons Society, which offers opportunities to enjoy special events, exhibits, and performances. For more information, visit [www.mtsuarts.com](http://www.mtsuarts.com) and click on the Patrons Society tab. [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)

## West by Middle

More than 30 Chinese schoolchildren visited Murfreesboro this past summer as part of an educational and cultural exchange guided by MTSU's Confucius Institute. The visitors from Dongcheng Education



Group of Hangzhou Normal University enjoyed a special day at the Discovery Center and a trip to east Tennessee to visit the Lost Sea attraction, part of Craighead Caverns near Sweetwater. Teachers and administrators from both countries met to exchange ideas and classroom experiences.



**A+ SCIENCE PROJECT** *continued from page 7*

upgrades will include new elevators, new windows, and a large glass walking connector between the two buildings that will create a new central entrance and a dramatic new look for the buildings.

*The renovations  
are being made  
with student success  
in mind.*

Together with the new \$147-million Science Building, renovations of the older buildings set the stage for a modern student-learning experience that builds on and surpasses what science students could expect in past decades. The improvements should help MTSU prepare more teachers for math and

science in K–12 schools, produce more science graduates to fill high-technology jobs, and enhance the economy of our region and state. They will also make MTSU more competitive for research projects, science scholarship, and entrepreneurial efforts. **MTSU**

**Recent photos of spaces to be renovated inside Davis Science and Wiser-Patten.**



# I AM *true* BLUE™

## RECAPTURE PROGRAM

Another enrollment initiative has also had a successful start. In the spring, we identified a population of 3,300 students with 90 hours or more of academic credits who had not been enrolled for a year or longer. Ten percent (330) of these students responded to the University outreach. Of that number, 41 are projected to graduate this year, and 101 more are enrolled for this fall. Another 75 or so are working toward returning in the near future.

This “recapture” program is going extremely well and has greatly exceeded our projection of 50 students. We look for this program to continue to yield both enrollments and graduations at approximately the current rate or a better one for several years to come.

**MTSU**

## ON THE BEAT

Speaking of enrollment, MTSU and the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Training Division recently reached an agreement that gives officers greater incentive to get their college degrees. Metro Nashville officers who have been through department’s five-and-a-half month training academy can now potentially receive 36 to 40 credits toward a bachelor’s degree in liberal studies through University College and the Behavioral and Health Sciences. About 160 officers a year go through the academy, and Metro officers can get up to a six percent pay raise for getting a degree. Officers have the option of completing their degrees on campus, online or through satellite classes held throughout the region.

This new initiative has received much attention from media as a great example of MTSU’s work to expand offerings for people who might not otherwise complete a degree but have a wealth of experience. MTSU plans to pursue similar partnerships in support Gov. Bill Haslam’s Drive to 55 initiative, which seeks to have 55 percent of Tennesseans with a degree or certificate by 2025.

Our University recently announced a similar partnership with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation that gives wastewater management workers opportunities to earn course credits and certifications. We recognize that there are many adult learners who would love the flexibility such agreements provide. Partnerships such as these create more paths for them to earn their degrees. **MTSU**





# ATHLETICS

The Middle Tennessee Athletic Department enjoyed another successful year in Conference USA in 2014–15. The Blue Raiders won two league championships, had three teams advance to postseason play, and had four athletes compete for national championships. The football team became bowl eligible for sixth time in nine years; the men's basketball team advanced to the league championship game; the baseball team won more games than in any season since 2010; and outdoor track finished 30th nationally. The women's golf team won its first-ever conference title and made its first-ever NCAA Regional appearance.



## Here are a few more recent achievements by MTSU student-athletes and the athletic program:

- During the spring 2015 semester, nine of 17 athletic teams had a semester team GPA of 3.0 or higher; 98 student-athletes made the Dean's List (GPA of 3.5 or higher); 37 student-athletes achieved a perfect 4.0; and 170 of MT's total of 312 student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher GPA (54 percent).
- For the sixth consecutive year, all 17 Middle Tennessee athletic teams earned a multiyear Academic Progress Rate (APR) of more than 930, as announced by the NCAA. The most recent APR scores are based on a multiyear rate that averages scores from the 2010–11, 2011–12, 2012–13, and 2013–14 academic years. The Blue Raiders had 10 of 17 sports with an APR of 970 or better, and men's and women's golf had perfect grades of 1,000. Football had an impressive multiyear score of 973, but its 2013–14 score of 992 tied for seventh-highest in the country, trailing only Alabama, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Northwestern, Minnesota, and Army. The 992 score also ranked



highest in MT history, besting the previous mark of 983 set in 2010–11. Six Blue Raider squads recorded perfect scores of 1,000 for 2013–14: baseball, women's basketball, women's cross country, men's golf, women's golf, and volleyball.

- Ten student-athletes were named to the Conference USA All-Academic Team for 2014–15: **Jordan Parker** (football); **Kelsey Branstetter**, **Kelsey Brouwer**, and **Tori Hawkins** (soccer); **Shadrack Matelong** (cross country); **Brett Patterson** (men's golf); **Atarah Abdullah-Muhammad** and **Atsu Nyamadi** (outdoor track); **Ronnie Jebavy** (baseball); and **Samantha Nieves** (softball).
- Junior outfielder **Ronnie Jebavy** became the fifth-highest drafted Blue Raider baseball player in history when he was selected in the fifth round of the MLB First-Year Player Draft by the **San Francisco Giants** this past June.
- Middle Tennessee standout golfer **Brett Patterson** was named Conference USA Men's Golf Scholar-Athlete of the Year for the second consecutive season. The McMinnville native and Business Administration major boasts a 4.0 GPA. Patterson is a three-time All-Conference and NCAA Tournament participant.
- Middle Tennessee's **John Ampomah** was named Conference USA Male Field Athlete of the Year, becoming just the third Blue Raider in history

to capture an Athlete of the Year award. Ampomah, a junior from Accra, Ghana, threw the javelin a 2015 NCAA-best 81.55 meters at the Penn Relays, winning the event at that prestigious competition. He also never failed to place below second in 10 outdoor meets, and took second place at the 2015 NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships.

- For the first time in men's tennis history, a Blue Raider recruiting class rated among the **top 25 best** in America, according to tennisrecruiting.com. A panel of 25 voted the 2015 MT recruiting class into the top 25 largely on the strength of six highly sought student-athlete commitments. The Blue Raiders are one of just two teams from Conference USA to make the list. (Rice University was the other.) The MT men's tennis program was one of just eight non-power conference teams to crack the top-25 list.
- On July 15, the City of Murfreesboro and MTSU officials unveiled the long-anticipated **Adams Indoor Tennis Complex**, an eight-court facility that greatly enhances the Blue Raider tennis program while increasing playing and tournament opportunities for area residents. The new \$6.2 million, 70,000-square foot complex, which is at Old Fort Park in Murfreesboro, is the latest partnership between the city, MTSU, and the nonprofit Christy-Houston Foundation.

- Conference USA commissioner Britton Banowsky named MT football player **Leighton Gasque** among 14 recipients of the prestigious Jim Castañeda Postgraduate Scholarship Award. Gasque, who ranks second all-time at MT with 22 quarterback sacks, completed his four-year career at linebacker last year. He was also voted team captain, was a finalist for the Senior CLASS Award, and was

semifinalist for the William V. Campbell Trophy. Gasque earned his B.S. in Aerospace with a Business Administration minor. Last summer, he participated in the NASA Internship Program at Ames Research Center in California. A native of Powder Springs, Georgia, Gasque is continuing his education at Middle Tennessee in Aviation Administration. **MTSU**



*The ribbon-cutting ceremony at the July 15 dedication of the \$5.8 million Adams Indoor Tennis Complex.*



**Perrin Buford**





Middle Tennessee State University

## Homecoming 2015

I could not be more excited about our upcoming Homecoming Week, which will culminate on Saturday, Oct. 3, with a home football game against Vanderbilt University. The theme of this year's Homecoming Week is "The Big Blue Easy."

The new Homecoming parade route will begin on East Main Street at Maney Avenue and will continue down Baird Avenue.

Join me to watch the 2015 Homecoming parade from the best place on campus—the president's lawn at Mixer on Main. The lawn will be filled with alumni and friends gathered for an event that could only happen at MTSU. This year's party will feature parade announcers, music, floats, light snacks, and souvenir photos of your group. After the parade, stay for the tailgate lunch at Mixer on Main, Raider Walk in the Grove, and, of course, the 6:00 p.m. kickoff vs. Vanderbilt!

A complete listing of all events can be found at our website or people can call the Alumni Office at 898-2922 for more information. **MTalumni.com is the premier Homecoming 2015 schedule for alumni and the community.**

★ **Monday, Sept. 28**

**5:00 p.m. Annual Chili Cook-off**  
(community event)

★ **Wednesday, Sept. 30**

**9:30 p.m. Homecoming Party**

★ **Friday, Oct. 2**

**10:00 a.m. Golden Raiders Reunion and Induction Ceremony Honoring the Class of 1965.**

All alumni who graduated 50 or more years ago are invited to the reunion. Induction into the Golden Raiders Society is open to those who graduated in 1965 or before who have yet to be officially inducted.

★ **Friday, Oct. 2**

**4:00 p.m. Distinguished Alumni Awards Reception.** Join alumni, faculty, staff, and friends to honor the 2015 Distinguished Alumni and True Blue Citation of Distinction Award recipients in MT Center at Sam Ingram Building. (RSVP at [www.mtalumni.com](http://www.mtalumni.com).)

**SAT OCT 3**



**6:00 PM KICKOFF**

## More Alumni News

The Alumni Relations Office hosted 10 different events this summer, giving families of alumni and friends of the University the chance to meet and mingle with other Blue Raiders.

From trips to minor league baseball games in cities across Tennessee to a brunch with alumni in Washington, D.C., the Alumni Relations team organized several visits with alumni and friends, including the annual Pigskin Pregame on Aug. 8, held this year at The Grove at Williamson Place with owners (and alumni) Brandon and Katherine Whitt. Alumni and friends enjoyed good food and entertainment at one of the area's best new venues.

This fall, Alumni Relations will invite some alumni to join the True Blue Tour, an opportunity for alumni in all parts of the state to work with us to recruit the best and brightest students in Tennessee for MTSU. (See page 22.)

**True Blue! MTSU**



**The 2014 Chili Cook-off during Homecoming. This year's event is Monday, Sept. 28.**



# October 3, 2015 11:00 a.m. 2015 Homecoming Parade Map

- ★ = Parade Start
- ✕ = Parade Finish
- = Mixer on Main Parade Watching Party Site (begins at 10:30 a.m.)
- = Suggested Parking Areas for Mixer on Main

*Best Parade Viewing is along East Main Street from Central Magnet School to Baird Lane.*

**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

I AM *true* **BLUE**



AA/EEO/Disability/Vet



**Several important information technology projects taking shape at MTSU truly highlight our collective focus on student success. Just a few examples include the following:**

### **EAB SSC Campus**

Further adoption of the Education Advisory Board (EAB) Student Success Collaborative (SSC) platform will enhance MTSU's already successful effort to identify at-risk students, conduct outreach campaigns, and improve retention and graduation by using one platform for advising and tutoring scheduling, multimodal communication, coordinated case management, early alerts, student engagement data, and effectiveness tracking. This project is underway and is expected to be fully implemented by early spring 2016.

### **Degree Works**

Degree Works is a Web-based tool to help students and advisors monitor progress toward degree completion. It replaces the RaiderNet Degree Evaluation menu option and gives MTSU a comprehensive set of Web-based academic advising, degree audit, and transfer articulation tools that allow academic advisors to provide real-time advice and counsel. Degree Works also allows advisors and students to create "what-if" scenarios for degree completion. This project is projected for completion by early spring 2016.

### **Finish-Line Scholarship**

We are developing RaiderNet programming to accommodate the new Finish Line Scholarship, which holds students harmless from any tuition increases instituted during their time in college as long as they stay on track and graduate in four years.

**Other technology initiatives in progress include the following:**

### **Faster Internet Access**

We began the fall 2014 semester with a connection to the Internet at 750 megabits per second. We increased the speed to 2,000 megabits per second during that semester to meet increased demand. As demand continues to rise, we are upgrading our hardware and circuits to begin fall 2015 with 6,000 megabits per second.

### **Responsible Printing/Copying**

As we move into a new academic year, we continue to share the commitment to finding ways to reduce unnecessary printing and to encourage responsible use of our resources. However, we have not yet found a printing solution that works effectively with a minimum disruption for students. While we continue to search for a solution, student printing will continue to be paid via prepaid Technology Access Fees and other university resources. As these are limited resources, we ask that you be frugal and conscientious when making printing decisions and not print unnecessarily or excessively.



### **Increase in Wireless Networking**

Over the past year, we have installed state-of-the-art wireless networks in Walker Library, the College of Education Building, the new Science Building, McCallie Cafeteria, Jones Hall, and all dorms. We are now upgrading wireless networks in Peck Hall, KOM, and the Bragg Building, all of which should be completed in the next few months. A timeline for installation in the rest of MTSU's buildings is available on the ITD website. [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)



## STUDENT LIFE

The formula for student success involves more than just ensuring students make it to class, fulfill course obligations, and get consistent and proper academic advising on their journey toward a degree. After all, college life is more than just books and classrooms.

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 they also need to connect socially outside the classroom to feel like they belong at MTSU.

*All of our students—especially freshmen—are being asked to attend a variety of events and activities by Sept. 8.*

That's why all of our students—especially freshmen—are being asked to attend a variety of events and activities by Sept. 8. Students are also asked to bring their MTSU Blue ID with them to these activities and events so that Student Affairs staff can card-swipe them into the event. **This will allow the staff to monitor student involvement to be sure they are connecting with the University.** Students who are not connecting will be contacted to determine how we can assist them in becoming more involved. You can learn more about this effort, known as the Connection Point program, and about other upcoming events at [www.mtsu.edu/connection](http://www.mtsu.edu/connection).

During the 10 CUSTOMS orientation sessions that occurred this summer, Student Affairs staff talked extensively with students about the Connection Point program and the importance of trying to attend eight student events by Sept. 8. With all the fun planned, it is hard to believe students won't respond to this effort.

This year's Week of Welcome theme is a flashback to the '80s: "Raiders Just Wanna Have Fun." **MTSU**



## CONVOCATION

"Today you are one of us."

With those words, Deb Sells, vice president of student affairs, on Sunday welcomed some 200 freshman and transfer students to MTSU at the 2015 University Convocation in Murphy Center.

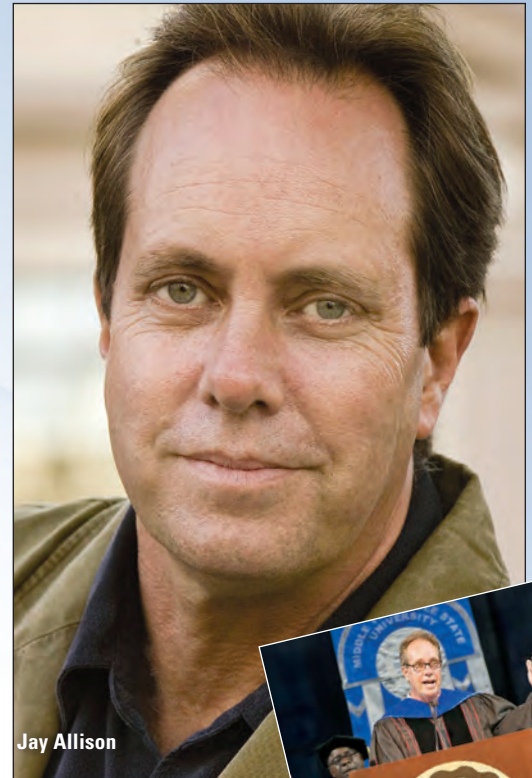
Convocation, the traditional start of the academic year, is part of the annual Week of Welcome celebration. Faculty dressed in academic regalia and carrying brightly colored banners lent a ceremonial air to the festivities similar to that of the semester-ending commencement ceremonies at which graduates receive their diplomas.

*This I Believe II: More Personal Philosophies of Remarkable Men and Women*, MTSU's 2015 Summer Reading Program selection, formed the basis for guest speaker Jay Allison's address.

Allison, who co-edited the book with Dan Gediman, produced the award-winning National Public Radio series on which the book and its predecessor volume are based. The modern radio series, which

ran on NPR from 2005 to 2009, was a renewal of the original 1950s series by CBS News legend Edward R. Murrow.

"The world can be changed coming to know one another through our stories," said Allison.



Jay Allison



## Physics Is Our Business

The Department of Physics and Astronomy has been nationally recognized for improving undergraduate physics education. The department was one of three honored by the American Physical Society, a physics and science education advocacy organization. The others were Indiana University, Purdue University-Fort Wayne, and Rochester Institute of Technology. This recognition follows an on-campus award granted to the department in 2013 as part of the University's Quest for Student Success initiative to improve retention and graduation rates.



# CONSTRUCTION

In addition to the \$20 million in renovations underway on our older science buildings (see related story on page 7), renovations of numerous other campus buildings are also underway or were recently completed. Here is a brief update on those recent and current projects.



## ▲ McFarland Building Renovation

The building has been renovated to accommodate the relocation of the Photography Department from the former Photography Building. The project is complete, and the building is fully operational. The Photography Building was demolished this spring 2015, allowing for the creation of a new, open green space between the new Science Building and McWherter Learning Resources Center (LRC).

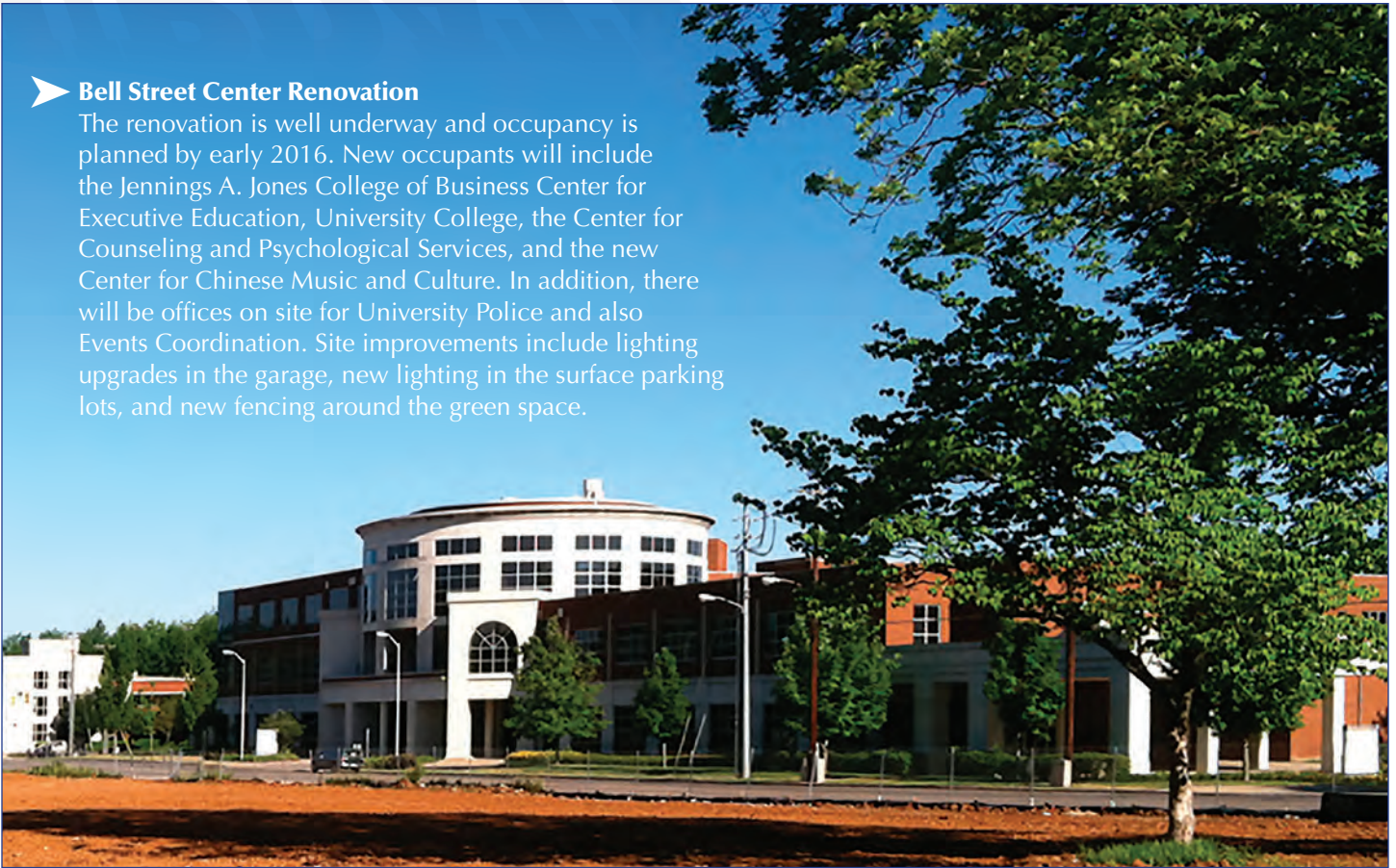




# UPDATE

## ▶ Bell Street Center Renovation

The renovation is well underway and occupancy is planned by early 2016. New occupants will include the Jennings A. Jones College of Business Center for Executive Education, University College, the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services, and the new Center for Chinese Music and Culture. In addition, there will be offices on site for University Police and also Events Coordination. Site improvements include lighting upgrades in the garage, new lighting in the surface parking lots, and new fencing around the green space.



## ◀ Flight Simulator Building

This project is designed to house program spaces for the Aerospace Department's flight training program, including a new classroom, flight briefing rooms, and new and existing flight simulators. The building is substantially complete and is planned for occupancy in summer 2015. The facility is located at the Murfreesboro Airport. [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)



## Inside the Beltway

The newest columnist for the *Washington Times* has an MTSU pedigree. Alongside widely read conservative commentators like Monica Crowley and Cal Thomas, Professor Colby Jubenville now contributes his views on self-reliance in both column and blog formats.



A Sports Management professor in the Department of Health and Human Performance, he also recently won the YP Nashville Impact Award from Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce, an honor given for his dedication to community leadership and professional development.

## FUNDRAISING

Advancement efforts continue to bring in valuable resources that affect all areas of the University. During the past fiscal year, gifts to **MTSU exceeded \$11 million**, making fiscal year 2015 one of the top-five fundraising years in University history.

Included in support from our alumni and friends was the establishment of a new international scholarship program, major gifts to our Honors College and the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences and the most



successful year ever for the Blue Raider Athletic Association.

With less than six months left in our Centennial Campaign, we have achieved many of the milestones that were set, and we are continuing to increase support. The campaign has moved into a greater focus on the needs of academic departments and programs, and we have been **working to create a culture of philanthropy among alumni of all ages**. We have also broadened our development team by increasing involvement and engagement of University leadership and faculty partners. **MTSU**



## PRINTING SERVICES

The University's Printing Services operation continues to expand its offerings, putting a special focus on aiding the student body's Quest for Success.



During the past year, Printing Services' two locations saw dramatic increases in orders filled. The production

their most pressing classroom needs and to develop a plan to address those needs in a proactive manner. As always, Printing Services pays special attention to its pricing structure to be sure the campus community is getting the best value for its purchases. **MTSU**

**www.mtsu.edu/blueprint/**  
**Telephone:** (615) 898-2100  
**Fax:** (615) 898-2070  
**Email:** [blue.print@mtsu.edu](mailto:blue.print@mtsu.edu)

facility on Greenland Drive focused on medium- to large-color publications, and the Blue Print Solutions retail site in the Student Union focused on smaller printing projects and a wide range of specialty, large-format projects.

Printing Services engages faculty and students on an ongoing basis to assess



## The Bottom Line

Recently, graduates of the Department of Accounting in Jennings A. Jones College of Business ranked second highest in Tennessee in passing rates on the CPA exam, ahead of Vanderbilt and Belmont.

## REACCREDITATION UPDATE

The compliance audit for our reaffirmation of accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) will be submitted in the coming weeks.

Importantly, the development of our new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), as part of the reaccreditation process, is well underway. The plan, branded MT Engage—which was announced in the fall 2014—will continue to be developed over the course of this fiscal year.

MT Engage focuses on providing professional development to faculty that helps infuse existing courses with

high-impact, engaging pedagogy. The intended result is an increased ability by our students to use integrative and reflective thinking, to enhance student academic engagement, to foster a University-wide culture of engaged learning, and, in the end, to improve student retention and graduation.

I encourage each of you to read the draft of the plan and make suggestions so that we can produce the best QEP possible. **Representatives of the SACSCOC will visit our campus in March 2016 to review our compliance audit and our QEP.** We will then fully launch MT Engage in fall 2016.

I want to thank the faculty, staff, and administrators who are serving on the committee to accomplish these goals. I also wish to thank those who have



Engage Academically.  
Learn Exponentially.  
Showcase Yourself.

provided feedback and who attended the open forums this past spring. Your input and participation in the MT Engage program are vital to its success. [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)

[www.mtsu.edu/QEP](http://www.mtsu.edu/QEP)

## MTSU IS TOBACCO FREE!

A student health assessment conducted by MTSU Student Health Services this past spring found that both monthly and regular tobacco use continued to decline among students. Monthly tobacco use is down 33 percent since 2009, and regular use (defined as usage three times per week or more) is down 35 percent.

Part of that decline can be explained by an overall decline in tobacco use. Nationally, monthly use has declined 15 percent, and regular use has declined 24 percent. The fact that our rates have declined more than national rates clearly indicates to me, though, that our tobacco-free campus policy is having a positive impact and leading to healthier behaviors among both our students and employees.

We have come a long way in a short time in our 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.

Compliance with our tobacco-free policy is not optional. 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! MTSU**



**MT**  
tobacco free

# trueBLUE

## R E S P E C T



**True Blue Respect** is a student-focused campaign that reinforces community standards. I want to remind you that two of those standards involve the proper use of golf carts on campus and our ongoing push to keep our campus clean and beautiful.

### Golf Cart Etiquette

With the start of fall classes, pedestrian and motorized traffic increases significantly throughout campus. That includes the use of golf carts, which are now included in the types of vehicles regulated by the University.



Anyone who is responsible for or drives an MTSU golf cart can check the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) website, [www.mtsu.edu/ehs](http://www.mtsu.edu/ehs), for instructions on complying with the golf cart guidelines. Examples of some 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.

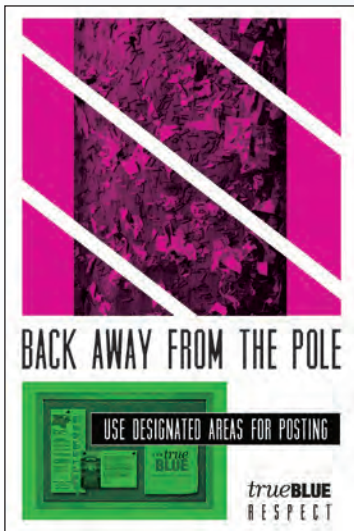
A map of preferred golf cart routes is also on the EHS site.

### Clean Campus Crew

Keeping our campus beautiful is a point of school pride for the Clean Campus Crew. The crew serves in conjunction with Facilities Services, which maintains the grounds of the entire University. These dedicated students are chosen to participate in a program that provides them with a work-study opportunity that includes the waiver of some tuition and fees.



One area in which the crew has helped significantly is in removing unauthorized signage that creates visual clutter and eventually litter. That willingness to spend time to help beautify our campus is an indication of school pride—or what we sometimes refer to as “Respecting the Blue.” [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)



# VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILY CENTER

I am proud that MTSU has been recognized year after year by national publications such as *Military Times* and *G.I. Jobs* magazine as being one of the top universities in the U.S. for veteran education. But we also recognize that there is much that needs to be done here to better serve this important community. I believe the recent creation of a Veterans and Military Family Center on campus is just the latest step in MTSU becoming the most military-friendly university in America.



*The recent creation of a Veterans and Military Family Center on campus is just the latest step in MTSU becoming the most military-friendly university in America.*

The new, 2,600-square-foot center will be on the first floor of Keathley University Center. The University has committed \$329,000 toward funding this project, which constitutes the largest and most comprehensive Veterans and Military Family Center in Tennessee. The official dedication of the center will be Thursday, November 5.

Recently, Gov. Bill Haslam announced that MTSU would receive a \$91,000 state grant to support its ongoing vet-success efforts.

The Center will occupy space formerly held by the VetSuccess on Campus office, the Military Center, and the Disability and Access Center (which will relocate to the KUC Testing Center). It will provide one-stop service and support for the more than 1,000 student veterans and their family members at MTSU. Everything our student-veterans need to succeed will

be available in this single location, from scheduling courses and completing government paperwork to getting questions answered about benefits and employment opportunities. The center will also have special space for discussions and study sessions and a conference room for video teleconferencing and employer job interviews. It will be staffed by fellow student-veterans, who will serve as peer advisors and sponsors.

I want to personally thank MTSU's new senior advisor for Veterans and Leadership Initiatives, Keith M. Huber, for his hard work on this and other vet-friendly initiatives underway



*Keith M. Huber*

on campus. This past spring, Huber ushered in a wonderful new practice: honoring graduating veterans with special stoles in a ceremony before commencement. Huber joined MTSU after retiring as a lieutenant general from the U.S. Army after nearly 40 years on active duty as an infantry and Special Forces officer.

I also wish to thank Hilary Miller, the center's director and a military spouse, who will lead an experienced staff at

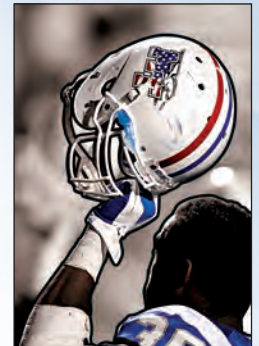


*Hilary Miller*



**Lieutenant General Keith Huber with student veterans walking MTSU's campus.**

the new center and work in concert with VA employees Heather Conrad (VetSuccess on Campus) and Ray Howell (Veteran Affairs coordinator).



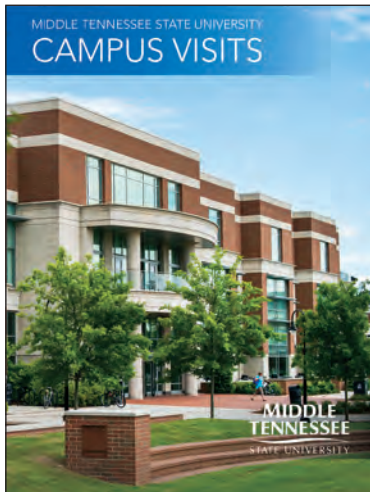
One last note: the center's dedication will occur two days before the Saturday, Nov. 7, "Salute to Armed Services" football game between MTSU and Marshall University. Associated activities on that day will include the annual memorial service, picnic for vets and their family members, and the special dedication of a POW/MIA seat on the 50-yard-line.

**True Blue! MTSU**



## ADMISSIONS EFFORTS

As we prepare for a new academic year, University leadership is already looking ahead to next year and will hit the road this fall for the annual **True Blue Tour** to recruit top students. Joining me on this year's recruit-



ment tour will be other top University administrators, deans from the University's academic colleges, the dean of Walker Library, and counselors from the Financial Aid and Admissions offices.

With the addition of three out-of-state visits, the True Blue Tour is expanding this year from six to nine stops. In Tennessee,

the tour will again visit Chattanooga, Johnson City, Knoxville, Nashville, Memphis, and Jackson. New out-of-state stops include Atlanta, Georgia; Huntsville, Alabama; and Bowling Green, Kentucky.

During the out-of-state visits, University leaders will emphasize MTSU's **Academic Common Market** program. This tuition-savings program allows prospective students who live in participating states to qualify for in-state tuition rates for academic majors not offered in their states.

The True Blue Tour is an annual opportunity for prospective students and their parents to hear firsthand from MTSU representatives, and get important information from counselors about admissions and financial aid. This is our chance to explain the remarkable educational experience MTSU offers.

Admissions counselors will also meet with high school counselors at eight of the tour stops and provide them with campus and program updates.

### The Fall True Blue Tour Reception Sites:

**Sept. 29:** Chattanooga Convention Center, 1 Carter Plaza, **Chattanooga**

**Sept. 30:** Cobb Galleria Centre, 2 Galleria Pkwy SE, **Atlanta**

**Oct. 19:** The Millennium Centre, 2001 Millennium Place, **Johnson City**

**Oct. 20:** The Foundry on the Fair Site, 747 World's Fair Park Drive, **Knoxville**

**Oct. 22:** Renaissance Nashville Hotel, 611 Commerce St., **Nashville**

**Nov. 4:** U.S. Space and Rocket Center, 1 Tranquility Base, **Huntsville**, Alabama

**Nov. 9:** The Peabody Memphis, 149 Union Ave., **Memphis**

**Nov. 10:** Jackson Country Club, 31 Jackson Country Club Drive, **Jackson**

**Nov. 11:** Holiday Inn University Plaza, 1021 Wilkinson Trace, **Bowling Green**, Kentucky

### Other Admissions Highlights:

- Freshman students who meet all scholarship criteria, and who complete applications for MTSU admission by no later than Dec. 1 will receive guaranteed awards. Transfer students who meet all transfer scholarship criteria and who complete applications for fall admission no later than Feb. 15 will also receive guaranteed awards.
- MTSU is reaching out to thousands of Tennessee high school seniors with ACT scores of 19 and higher by mailing a brochure inviting them to attend a True Blue Tour event and visit the Murfreesboro campus.
- Fall Preview Days have been scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 26, and Saturday, Nov. 7, starting at 8:00 a.m. in the Student Union Building. [MTSU](#)



*For even more admissions highlights, see page 28 ►*

# MIDPOINTS

## The Digital Frontier

To reduce textbook costs and keep students on track to complete their classes, MTSU is testing a program to offer digital textbooks as part of tuition or fees. Starting this fall semester, some classes will offer the includED program, a partnership between MTSU and bookstore firm Follett Higher Education Group that provides all required course materials as a part of tuition or fees. The new program will be tested with certain freshman and sophomore courses in astronomy, physical science, and University Seminar. Students enrolled thus far in the pilot courses will see almost \$70,000 in savings. The program allows financial aid to be applied to course materials and also gives the University the ability to negotiate a lower price and pass savings on to students.

## New College Name

The College of Mass Communication is now the **College of Media and Entertainment!** As it prepares a new generation of students for opportunities in an ever-changing media environment, the college will build on its strengths of teaching and research with an infusion of innovation and hands-on experiences: (1) the consolidation of all journalism education into a single department, establishing a rich, multimedia learning environment; (2) the convergence of student media into a single multimedia approach; (3) the launch of Studio M, a bold new project from the Center for Innovation in Media focusing on millennials and mobile content; and (4) the rollout of J-Lab, a training and recruiting tool providing high school students with their first experiences in digital journalism.

In truth, this is more of a rebooting of the college than a renaming. The College of Media and Entertainment will **focus on the media and communication of the future**, offering students the insights and

tools they'll need to be successful in their careers and in their lives.

## The Science of Sports

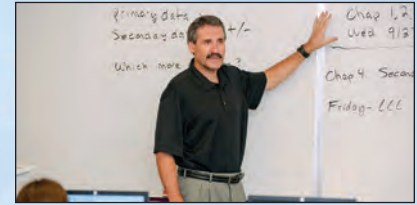
The College of Behavioral and Health Sciences entered an exchange agreement with a South Korean secondary school that specializes in sports science. Ulsan Sports Science Secondary School, a new middle and high school on the outskirts of the industrial city of Ulsan, is dedicated to the education and training of aspiring professional athletes and students interested in many other sports-related careers.

## Heads of the Class

Thirteen of the 41 valedictorians at Murfreesboro's Central Magnet School, recently named one of the top four public high schools in Tennessee, chose to attend MTSU starting this fall. A recent survey by the *Daily News Journal* of valedictorians and salutatorians graduating this year from Rutherford County high schools showed that MTSU was the school of choice for the largest group of those students.

## Statewide Results

The University and the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce and Industry recently partnered to launch the



Tennessee Business Barometer, a new quarterly index capturing the mood and outlook of business leaders statewide through online surveys. Dr. Tim Graeff, professor of marketing in Jennings A. Jones College of Business, coordinates the index. The first edition indicated that Tennessee business leaders are optimistic about future growth.

## Paying It Forward

With rising education expenses and the rigor of teacher preparation, more must be done to ensure that Tennessee's best potential teachers actually make it to the classroom. Last year, the College

*continued on page 24* ➤

## Degree by Design

The College of Liberal Arts now offers an advanced degree degree that allows students to develop skills and expand knowledge in subjects they're most passionate about. The new Master of Arts in Liberal Arts is an innovative program allowing anyone with a bachelor's degree to earn a graduate degree through a course of study built around subjects they find most captivating. The degree should especially interest lifelong learners, professionals, students returning to school after a break, and even recent graduates.



## MIDPOINTS *continued from page 23*

of Education established the ASPIRE to Teach Grant, an initiative that has already helped some of our most talented candidates make it through their college preparation and wind up where they belong—teaching in a classroom. The initiative has awarded more than \$5,000 to 21 students. Most of them have already graduated and started their teaching careers.

## New Blue

Several new academic programs and initiatives were launched in 2014–15: new undergraduate degree approvals in History (B.S.), International Relations (B.A.), Philosophy (B.S.), Anthropology (B.A.), Theatre (B.S.), and Speech Language Pathology and Audiology (B.S.); new graduate approvals in Liberal Arts (M.A.), Library Science (M.L.S.), and Finance (M.S.); and new graduate concentration approvals in Music Business (M.B.A.) and Health Care Management (M.B.A.).

## Sky High

The field of precision agriculture has made great technological strides in



recent years. Dr. Song Cui was hired two years ago to lead MTSU into national prominence

in this cutting-edge field. His focus on working with the Aerospace program to develop sophisticated unmanned technology is already yielding impressive results. Cui recently received one of the largest new grants at MTSU, valued at \$299,899, to enhance unmanned aerial systems–based precision agriculture education and research in Tennessee. This is MTSU’s first award with the new United States Department of Agriculture Non-Land Grant Colleges of Agriculture designation. The award has the potential to create a center of expertise in the use of unmanned aircraft in agriculture. (UT–Martin is a partner in this award.)

## Solid Evidence

MTSU’s Forensic Science degree program is booming, with six graduates this year. Under the direction of former Biology chair Dr. George Murphy, the program grew to over 100 majors. When launched in 2010, the bachelor’s-level program was the only one in Tennessee and one of just a handful in the Southeast. The major focuses on lab work including DNA, trace-evidence, and chemical analysis. Murphy retired July 31, and Frank Bailey took over effective August 1.



## Where Credit is Due

The Master Plan survey given to students in spring 2015 identified Walker Library as the top choice for study and collaborative work. The library has 23,000 visits per week and over 1.1 million website hits. At Walker’s first-ever party for incoming freshmen during Week of Welcome last fall, over 500 students attended—the biggest Week



of Welcome event on campus. The library instruction program taught

326 classes to prepare students for college-level research and the use of information. The library makes MTSU scholarship more visible through its digital initiatives. In the year since the launch of JEWLScholar (the James E. Walker Library institutional repository), the repository has obtained more than 4,300 articles and reports including all MTSU dissertations. The library has continued to expand its access to collections with the addition of more than 2.5 million streaming audio tracks and 3,000 streaming videos. Walker also just opened a listening room for its 3,500 vinyl albums.

## Skin in the Game

During fiscal year 2015, the Office of Research helped in the submission of 190 proposals requesting more than \$33 million in external support for the University. This is the second-highest number of proposals submitted in one year. The office also successfully managed 201 active grants and contracts with no audit findings; received 117 awards totaling \$10.8 million; awarded URECA (99 students with 43 faculty mentors) and FRCAC (25 faculty) grants and partially funded startup packages for new faculty; met proactively with new faculty and held nine group brainstorming sessions focused on larger interdisciplinary grant opportunities; solicited invention disclosures, resulting in 10 provisional or utility patent applications; increased economic development and commercialization activity; and participated in ongoing advanced automotive manufacturing community consortiums.

## Resting Her Case

Leigh Stanfield, a junior from Soddy-Daisy who is concentrating in Communications Studies, won a national title in the novice division at the International Public Debate Association’s National Championship Tournament at Boise State University in Idaho in March 2015. Her MTSU



Leigh Stanfield

Debate teammate Abigail Barnes, a sophomore English major from Morristown, took third place in the same category. A special exhibition debate hosted by MTSU in April featured three MTSU debaters and three Irish students who won the 2015 Irish Times Debate Championship.



## Water Work

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and MTSU announced a partnership to expand opportunities for earning course credit and certifications through TDEC's Fleming Training Center in Murfreesboro, online, and at other statewide locations. "Fleming Training Center offers cutting-edge technology and advanced classes in a variety of water areas," said Bob Martineau, TDEC commissioner. "Having qualified candidates for these jobs is essential for protecting public health and the environment." According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the water supply and sanitation sector is expected to experience an employment growth rate of 45 percent in coming years due to regulations, infrastructure growth, security, and customer demands. "This collaborative effort is a perfect example of the innovation that Tennessee needs in order to meet the Drive to 55," said Mike Krause, executive director of Bill Haslam's initiative to have 55 percent of Tennesseans equipped with a college degree or certificate by 2025.



Left to right, **President Sidney A. McPhee**; **Chancellor John Morgan, TBR**; and **Commissioner Bob Martineau, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation**.

*continued on page 26* ►

## GOOD WORKS

New grants and contracts in 2015 included the following:

★ **Dr. Raphael Bundage, School of Music.**



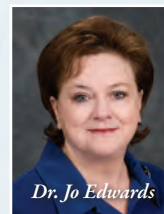
Tennessee Department of Education, \$480,042, "Governor's School for the Arts," providing continued support for the 31st annual Governor's School for the Arts at MTSU, the state's oldest and largest Governor's School with more than 9,000 alumni.

★ **Provost Brad Bartel, Office of the Provost.**



National Science Foundation, \$199,340, "A Catalyst to ADVANCE the Participation and Advancement of Women in Academic STEM Careers at MTSU," funding a self-assessment to review the status of women faculty in STEM disciplines at MTSU and identify barriers these faculty members might face.

★ **Dr. Jo Edwards, Center for Health and**



**Human Services.** Tennessee Department of Health, \$177,619, "Tennessee Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan and Cancer Education Activities," facilitating activities to prevent and control.

★ **Dr. Mary Evins, Center for Historic Preservation.**



National Endowment for the Humanities, \$119,895, "Religious Pluralism in Middle Tennessee: An NEH Bridging Cultures Project," highlighting the role of the humanities in enhancing understanding and respect for diverse cultures and subcultures.

★ **Dr. Ryan Otter, Molecular Biosciences.**



U.S. Geological Survey, \$55,000, "Great Lakes—Remedy Effectiveness Framework," developing and applying a new model to guide the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's decisions regarding 43 sites in the Great Lakes shared by the U.S. and Canada that are areas of concern. [MTSU](http://www.mtsu.edu)

## Painting the Grammys True Blue

Nearly 20 MTSU alumni and faculty have been nominated for Grammy Awards in the last five years. Seven have won Grammys so far, including some repeat recipients, in categories from classical to gospel to bluegrass.



In February 2015, one song won Grammy gold for a pair of former MTSU students. "Messengers," cowritten by 2003 music business graduate Torrance Esmond and former student Lecrae Moore for Moore's latest album, won the award for Best Contemporary Christian Music Performance/Song during the 57th annual Grammy Award ceremonies at Staples Center in Los Angeles. MTSU alumni Luke Laird ('01), and Jaren Johnston were nominated for Grammys in 2015 in the Best Country Song category.

Just weeks after his Grammy win, Esmond, who's known professionally as "Street Symphony," visited MTSU to talk to students and to establish the Street Symphony Scholarship, a \$750-per-semester award for MTSU Recording Industry students.

For two consecutive years, 2014 and 2015, MTSU has been one of the universities with the highest profile at the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. The 2015 trip featured three events: a Saturday brunch in downtown Los Angeles that honored alumna Alicia Warwick ('99), executive director of the Recording Academy's Nashville chapter; a Saturday evening dinner in Malibu with MTSU alums from the region; and a Sunday pre-Grammys reception

with Nashville-based Leadership Music, a program that brings together established leaders in the music business to discuss issues affecting the industry. President Sidney A. McPhee, Dean Ken Paulson of the College of Media and Entertainment, and Recording Industry Department chair Beverly Keel were front and center for entire event.

"MTSU is a valued partner and friend, and we appreciate its help in staging this great event before the Grammy Awards," said Diane Pearson, president of Leadership Music and an executive with City National Bank. "It means a great deal to have the University's leadership here today."

Meanwhile, inside Staples Center, MTSU alumnus Garry Hood ('77) was serving as head stage manager for the ceremony.

Hood has been head stage manager for more than 1,000 hours of network television specials including Olympic opening and closing ceremonies, presidential inaugurations, the Kennedy Center Honors, Super Bowl halftime shows, and most of the major entertainment awards ceremonies.

## Better by Design

Mechatronics Engineering, one of MTSU newest majors, received a three-



year, \$614,172 grant from the National Science Foundation for scholarships to help expand the program, which combines mechanical, computer, and electrical engineering, systems integration, and project management. At least 15 incoming freshmen for each of the next three years will receive scholarships of up to \$10,000.

## Fully Engaged

MTSU was among just 240 colleges and universities across the country to receive the 2015 Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. MTSU is also among 157 of those institutions reclassified for the designation after having first achieved it in either 2006 or 2008. According to Carnegie documents, the classification identifies "campuses that are improving teaching and learning, producing research that makes a difference in communities, and revitalizing their civic and academic missions."

## Southern Fried Expedition

In March 2015, MTSU agriculture professor and alternative fuels researcher Cliff Ricketts and a five-



member team (which included student Ben Black) completed a coast-

to-coast drive from Key West to Seattle using nothing but waste chicken fat and used cooking oil from University dining facilities for fuel. The "Southern Fried Fuel" expedition was another career milestone for Ricketts, 66, who in 2014 drove coast-to-coast in vehicles powered exclusively by sun and water.

## The Sky's the Limit

Unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) are creating thousands of new jobs in many



industries and proving to be a major factor in aviation worldwide. That's why MTSU

students who earn bachelor's degrees in the Department of Aerospace's new UAS Operations concentration, which

started this year, will be a part of a growing business sector expected to produce 70,000 new jobs, starting salaries of \$50,000 or more, and \$13.6 billion for the U.S. economy in the next three to five years. The concentration received Tennessee Board of Regents approval late last year, making MTSU one of only a handful of colleges or universities in the U.S. to offer UAS studies leading to a degree.

## Hands-on Learning

Students from the former College of Mass Communication worked at Bonnaroo this summer under the second year of MTSU's partnership



with festival organizers. Using MTSU's \$1.7 million mobile production studio, students captured video performances on the festival's Who Stage. Other students filed stories and videos for area news media outlets. Dean Ken Paulson said, "It's important that we extend our teaching beyond the walls of our college."



**A group of Electronic Media Communication students worked the stage, and a crew of student journalists covered the music and arts festival.**

## Moon Shot

The MTSU Experimental Vehicles lunar rover team regained its status as best in the nation with a 5-minute-plus finish



April 18 at the U.S. Space and Rocket Center half-mile obstacle course in Huntsville, Alabama. The student-built rover nicknamed "The Beast" placed third overall behind Russia and runner-up Germany in the NASA Human Exploration Rover Challenge. The event is held annually for university and high school teams to encourage research and development of new technology for future mission planning and crewed space missions.



Murfreesboro's Central Magnet School, which relies on MTSU for parts, machining, and advising, placed 11th in the high school division. The Experimental Vehicles Formula Hybrid MTSU team later competed for the first time in the Society of Automotive Engineers Collegiate Design Series event held at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon, New Hampshire. Judges awarded the team the top presentation with the highest score in the nine-year history of the event. [MTSU](#)

## HITTING OUR STRIDE

*continued from page 2*

- Expanding our **dual-enrollment program**. Courses counting for both high school and MTSU graduation requirements are available at our partnering high schools, on the MTSU campus, and online.
- Attracting non-traditional students to our campus through unique programs including the **Recapture program** that focuses on adults who earned a significant number of college credits but did not graduate.
- Building on our existing efforts to support our **military students and veterans**.

Clearly, the University is committed to the success of every student, and we have committed considerable resources

*I would urge each of you to take a look at your own students and classes, asking yourself "What can I do to make this experience better, more meaningful, and more effective?"*

to making MTSU a success-oriented institution. However, **the interactions you have in your classrooms and in your encounters with students form the basis of everything we do.** I would urge each of you to take a look at your own students and classes, asking yourself "What can I do to make this experience better, more meaningful, and more effective?" I ask—no urge—each of you to be accountable and accept your responsibility to help take us to an even higher level of achievement. Much can be done if we all work together.

**Best wishes for a wonderful fall semester, and I look forward to an even greater year for our Blue Raider family! [MTSU](#)**

## GRADUATE STUDIES UPDATE

The College of Graduate Studies experienced several significant successes in the past year. Among them are:

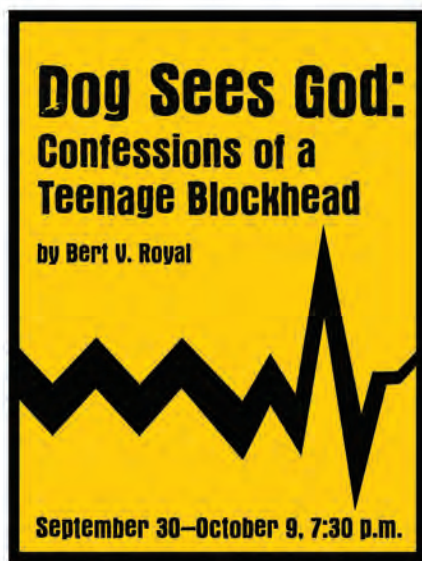
- While all of our programs well-prepare students and have great success placing them in jobs following their graduation, the Information Systems program maintains a near-perfect level of placement in the professional areas of data, healthcare management, insurance, and financial services;
- Our nine doctoral programs have been extremely productive, graduating 29 students over the past year. The English doctoral program in particular has done a great job in placing graduates specifically in positions within Tennessee's community college system and at HBCUs.
- Our three, interdisciplinary doctoral science programs (Math and Science Education, Computational Sciences, and Molecular Biosciences) successfully completed their external reviews with favorable comments. Since their inception five years ago, these three programs have accounted for 119 publications by students and faculty, with an even greater number of national and international presentations by students.
- We currently have 42 students in our nine ABM programs, with the first students successfully transitioning from the undergraduate to the graduate level;
- And, at the Master's level, there have been many individual successes, including Rebecca Robinson (M.A. in History), who received the 2014–2015 Tennessee Council of Graduate Schools thesis award for her thesis.

**True Blue! MTSU**

### Don't miss this upcoming production at Tucker Theatre!

Visit [www.mtsu.edu/mtsuarts](http://www.mtsu.edu/mtsuarts) for tickets or call 1-888-71-TICKETS.

MTSU student tickets are **FREE** with student ID at the box office.



Tucker Theatre, Boutwell Dramatic Arts Building

For tickets, visit [www.mtsu.edu/mtsuarts](http://www.mtsu.edu/mtsuarts) or call 1-888-71-TICKETS.

MTSU student tickets are FREE with student ID at the box office.

Ascend  
Productions  
PREVIOUSLY PRESENTS

MTSU Arts  
ART • DANCE • MUSIC • THEATRE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE  
STATE UNIVERSITY  
I AM true  
BLUE

## HERE ARE SOME ADDITIONAL ADMISSIONS-RELATED HIGHLIGHTS:

- As part of the 2014-15 recruiting cycle, admissions staff drove enough miles to circle the earth three times and still have miles enough left to drive to the North Pole. They logged more than 87,000 miles!
- Transfer recruiters traveled over 10,000 miles to make more than 150 visits to community college campuses, fairs, and events.
- More than 9,000 visitors took part in campus tours between January and July of 2015.
- To close the deal on the incoming fall 2015 class, admissions staff made more than 5,500 phone calls to students who had been admitted but had not yet signed up for their CUSTOMS orientation session.
- During 2014–15, the Financial Aid Office and Bursar processed financial assistance in the amount of \$241,293,298 to 21,901 unduplicated students.
- Scholarship awards have been combined and edited to create a more streamlined and easy-to-understand menu of opportunities for our best and brightest students.
- The Transfer Guaranteed Scholarship GPA requirement, previously a 3.5 GPA for students from non-TBR institutions, has been adjusted to a 3.0 in order to be consistent with the awards we make to transfer students from other TBR institutions. **True Blue! MTSU**

0715-2004 / Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or against any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs, and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries related to nondiscrimination policies for MTSU: Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and Compliance. For additional information about these policies and the procedures for resolution, please contact Marian V. Wilson, Assistant to the President and Title IX Coordinator, Institutional Equity and Compliance, Middle Tennessee State University, Cope Administration Building 116, 1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132; [Marian.Wilson@mtsu.edu](mailto:Marian.Wilson@mtsu.edu); or call (615) 898-2185. MTSU's policy on nondiscrimination can be found at <http://www.mtsu.edu/titleix/>.