

NEWS & information

FROM THE PRESIDENT Sidney A. McPhee



Welcome to the Spring '23 Semester!

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 welcome your feedback! Email me at sidney.mcphee@mtsu.edu. I invite you to check out "President's Post" at 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!

SIDNEY A. MCPHEE

ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS

One of the metrics we monitor as the fall 2023 incoming class takes shape is our "count of admits" on **Dec. 1, 2022**. This date marks the application deadline to be considered for our guaranteed freshman academic scholarships.

Two significant changes have been made to our array of guaranteed freshman scholarships effective with the incoming fall 2023 freshmen.

First, in an effort to stay competitive with other Tennessee institutions as we work to attract the highest achieving new students, MTSU increased the value of our highest guaranteed scholarship with the new **Centennial Scholarship, at \$8,000 per year.**

Next, a review of declining national and statewide average ACT scores, coupled with conversations with our partner guidance counselors in high schools statewide, also suggested that it was time to increase and expand our guaranteed scholarship at the beginning end of the array. To that end, we have expanded the **True Blue Scholarship** to include applicants with **ACT scores of 22–24** and increased the value of the award to **\$3,500 per year.**

As a result of these changes—and the considerable effort of our undergraduate

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MTSU ONLINE

In 2022, *Newsweek* named MTSU to its "Top Online Colleges" list. MTSU was the **only** institution in Tennessee recognized.

We've built one of the largest adult degree programs in Tennessee. At MTSU, we provide access to undergraduate and graduate programs for students who might not be able to pursue traditional attendance paths. This includes online instruction.

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MTSU ONLINE *CONT.*

With a distinguished 20-year history of high-quality distance education, MTSU Online continues to support our faculty and to serve students through the creation, design, and delivery of effective and engaging online and blended learning environments.

This past year has been a time of significant growth for MTSU Online. **Online enrollment is at an all-time high**, with more than 2,700 completely online students and more than 7,200 partially online students. These record numbers are a credit to our faculty who have been willing to serve our students in new and innovative ways. This is also a credit to our MTSU Online staff and instructional designers as they assist and coach faculty toward high-quality online teaching and learning environments.

Two years ago, in response to student demand, MTSU Online began an initiative to increase the number of completely online degrees. Thanks to the hard work of our faculty, staff, and administrators, **we have increased from 16 to 32 completely online degrees.**

Our goal is to ensure MTSU is ready and available to provide an education for every student who is seeking to learn, regardless of their geographic location. In 2022 alone, MTSU Online funded **29 full-time temporary instructors for 18 departments across campus.** These instructors are trained in online teaching and give significant help to departments that are serving online students.

A key distinction this year has been our significant expansion of peer mentoring for faculty around online

teaching. Through our expanded online faculty mentor program, dozens of faculty members have engaged in individual and group activities as they learn about and investigate best practices in online teaching. We support faculty through a range of services such as course design help, faculty training workshops, individual consultations, and extensive web-based resources. Our three instructional designers (IDs) are key resources for faculty as they develop and deliver engaging learning environments. In 2022, our IDs helped design **102 new online courses and redesign an additional 70 courses.** MTSU now has a portfolio of more than 750 well-designed online courses to contribute to student access and success.

In terms of student support, MTSU Online provides personal assistance to hundreds of students via phone, email, and videoconference meetings. Live and online tutoring is a popular service we offer, as well as advising help, counseling services, and assistance navigating the online course environment.

It has been another strong year for MTSU Online, part of the University's strategic outreach to students who utilize online courses as part of their educational goals. This past calendar year, MTSU Online set records for total online enrollment, number of online courses, number of student credit hours online (57,720), and number of online degree programs.

MTSU online

Scholarship	ACT	GPA	Per Year
NEW Centennial Scholar	34–36	3.5	\$8,000
National Merit/Achievement/Hispanic Semifinalist			\$6,000
Trustee Scholarship	30–33	3.5	\$5,000
Presidential Scholarship	25–29	3.5	\$4,500
NEW True Blue Scholarship	22–24	3.5	\$3,500

For freshmen entering Fall 2023—be sure to submit all application materials to MTSU before December 1. Previous recipients of our guaranteed scholarships are not eligible.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

recruitment team—**scholarship offers to eligible students are up more than 23% over the same period last year.**

Overall, applications for both transfer students and first-time freshmen are **up 17.5%**.

Admitted student numbers are up 6.2% for new freshmen and up 30.4% for transfer students.

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This is an outstanding data point in light of the significant losses our Tennessee community colleges have suffered in the past several years. Still, it is important to remember that it is very early in the enrollment cycle for transfer students. Their application deadline for scholarship consideration is **Feb. 15**.

All of this is great news! But spring is the time to focus on “yield” and to redouble our efforts to convince these accepted students that MTSU is the best place for them to invest in their futures.

Undergraduate recruitment will host **True Blue Preview** events on **Feb. 11** and **March 25** here on campus. **Faculty are especially encouraged to attend the True Blue Preview events to connect with prospective students** and to help them to understand why, of all the schools to which they have applied, MTSU is the right place for them to enroll.

Separately, MTSU recently began advertising that **many students can attend the University tuition free**. MTSU launched an effort last July to help students navigate several scenarios and options that could eliminate, or greatly

reduce, the cost of tuition. MTSU’s tuition was already the lowest of the state’s three major universities. Our decision to hold it flat for this academic year, plus recent increases in the state’s HOPE Lottery Scholarship, meant many could attend our University at no tuition cost. Admissions recruiters and academic advisors encourage students to go to a new website, mtsu.edu/mtfree, and engage with an enrollment coordinator through a Zoom portal. Coordinators will review various scenarios with students to determine eligibility.

MTSU’s Board of Trustees voted last June to keep tuition and program services fees flat for the 2022–23 academic year. A full-time, in-state undergraduate student taking 15 credit hours in both the fall and spring semesters will pay \$7,704 in tuition and \$1,888 in program service fees, for a total of \$9,592 this academic year. Also, the state recently increased the amount of its HOPE Lottery Scholarship, raising what it pays eligible freshmen and sophomores to \$4,500 a year from \$3,500, while **juniors and seniors will receive \$5,700 a year instead of \$4,500**. To qualify for these awards, students need a **21 on the ACT** or must graduate high school with a **3.0 GPA**. For HOPE-eligible students, the difference (less than \$5,100)



between MTSU’s tuition cost and the scholarship payout could be mitigated by a variety and combination of means—including federal Pell Grant monies, academic scholarships from MTSU, and tuition discounts afforded to teachers and state employees. *The scenarios outlined on the MTFree website apply only to first-time freshmen who are Tennessee residents and would be attending as full-time students.*

Lastly, more than 100 students, representing nearly as many academic programs, have shared their passion for MTSU in the video series **“Why I Chose MTSU”** on the University’s **YouTube channel**. The videos were sent to admitted students with a Happy New Year’s message during the first week of January. **Many thanks to the department chairs and faculty who helped select and recruit students to star in the video series.**

To see the videos, visit: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLsJ4ZEMqDTNn7sMX_dUd9tqx3Xa3XI0KN

CAMPUS PLANNING

The physical landscape of the MTSU campus continues to evolve and grow in positive ways! Here are some key construction updates.



SCHOOL OF CONCRETE AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Students began using MTSU's new \$40.1 million School of Concrete and Construction Management (CCM) Building on the west side of campus in October, as they prepare for professional careers in a high-demand sector throughout the booming Nashville area and beyond.

Among the many features of the integrated and experiential learning laboratory are:

- four basic materials and building labs
- a dedicated mechanical, electrical, and plumbing classroom
- a 200-seat lecture hall and a covered amphitheater
- a virtual design and construction lab capable of advanced building models and construction simulations
- an augmented virtual reality lab

Construction is a \$1 trillion-plus industry that impacts every aspect of life—where we live, work, learn, shop, dine, and more. Students graduating from the programs average \$60,000-plus in starting salary and have an almost 100% placement rate.

I'm amazed at the many ways concrete was utilized in the design and construction. Students will see firsthand how the many forms of concrete can add value and creativity to a structure. The building is a true living laboratory, with examples of various construction techniques and operating systems operating in full view of students.

The 54,000-square-foot building is a major change for the 135 current Concrete Industry Management majors and 200 Construction Management students from their previous 9,000-square-foot Voorhies Engineering Technology space. Along with a neighboring Applied Engineering Building, set for groundbreaking this spring (see below), the new facility marks an expansion of MTSU's Science Corridor of Innovation.

KOM AND RUTLEDGE HALL RENOVATION

Design has started for this project, and Anecdote is the designer of record. Design will continue through 2023 with **construction set to begin in summer 2024**. Kirksey Old Main will house Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, and Data Science. Rutledge will be converted from a residential hall into an office/classroom building to house University College/University Studies. Renovations to both structures will include major renovations of HVAC, plumbing, data/IT, and electrical systems; replanning of building layouts to accommodate future use; accessibility improvements; window replacement; roofing; and other exterior building improvements. Small additions are also envisioned on both buildings to allow for new entries and vertical circulation. **Demolition of the E.W. Midgett Building will be included in the scope of work.**

APPLIED ENGINEERING BUILDING

The 89,000-square-foot Applied Engineering Building will serve as the home for the **Engineering Technology and Mechatronics Engineering programs** as well as provide space for future engineering programs. We are currently wrapping up construction drawings. The project includes demolition of Voorhies, infrastructure, site improvements, and surrounding pedestrian and vehicular circulation. HFR Inc. (Nashville) and Cooper Carry (Atlanta) are the designers for the project. **Construction completion is anticipated in summer 2025.**

CAPITAL MAINTENANCE

Multiple capital maintenance projects are ongoing across campus, including:

- Cope Administration Building reroof
- Campuswide utilities repair and replacement
- Elevator modernizations

APPLIED ENGINEERING BUILDING

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TENNIS COMPLEX

Construction has started on our new on-campus tennis facility at the corner of Middle Tennessee Boulevard and Greenland Drive. The outdoor complex will include eight tennis courts, seating for 250 fans, new locker rooms, and new coaches' offices. Project completion is fall 2023.

STUDENT ATHLETE PERFORMANCE CENTER

Design continues for this project. **Goodwyn Mills Cawood** is the designer of record for this project with HOK as a design consultant. Construction is set to begin this spring. The center will include new athletic offices, locker rooms, training areas, football operations space, and support spaces. The project scope also contains required site development including parking improvements and site utilities. To facilitate the desired location of the building, we will be relocating the Murphy Center loading dock.



A planned groundbreaking ceremony for the new center scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 19, was postponed in respect for alumnus and Trustee Joey Jacobs, who died on Saturday, Jan. 14. Jacobs was among the leaders of the Build Blue campaign, an ambitious effort announced in late 2021 to improve and modernize the University's athletics facilities. (See story on Jacobs on page 18.)



BUDGET AND SALARY OVERVIEW

Looking toward fiscal year 2023–24, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is recommending operating **state appropriations of \$138.9 million for MTSU**. This will be a \$12.3 million increase, or 9.8%, over 2022–23 appropriations. **Funding for any 2023–24 salary increases is not included in these figures and will not be known until the release of the governor’s budget in early February.**

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In September, the MTSU Board of Trustees approved one fiscal year 2023–24 Capital Outlay Project to be submitted to THEC. The request was for an additional \$20 million for the Applied Engineering Building project, which was approved and funded in the 2021–22 governor’s budget. Preliminary contractor pricing received last August indicated an estimated construction cost of \$13 million over the original budgeted amount. The cost increase is due to inflation of construction costs by approximately 20% in

the last year. This will increase the total building project to \$74.8 million. **THEC included the \$20 million in the budget request to the governor.**

THEC also voted to recommend **\$15.8 million in capital maintenance funds** for nine MTSU projects, which include hydronic systems renovation, life safety systems updates, building exterior envelope updates, roof replacements, elevator modernization, repair and replacement of campus utility systems (three phases), and sidewalk repair and replacement. In addition, for fiscal year 2023–24, the commission proposed two separate funding requests for special initiatives for ADA improvements and safety and security. **MTSU’s portion will be \$7.7 million for ADA improvements and \$2.1 million for safety and security.**

THEC’s recommendations have been submitted to the Department of Finance and Administration for consideration in the proposed state budget that Gov. Bill Lee will be submitting to the state legislature. **At that point, we will have more information regarding our likely 2023–24 state and capital appropriations.**

OFFICE OF STUDENT SUCCESS

The Scholars Academy, one of the Office of Student Success' staple programs, welcomed its newest cohort of 123 students last fall. Fifty-four percent of these scholars achieved a grade point average of 3.0 or above (a sister program, the Student Transition and Academic Readiness program, or S.T.A.R, attracted 174 students). Twelve percent of the Scholars Academy students achieved grade point averages of 4.0. Finally, the persistence rate for this cohort is currently 93%.

Both tutoring and supplemental instruction continue to make a positive impact on the success of our MTSU

With our focus on Quest 2025, we are making great strides in helping to eliminate the achievement gap.

students. In fall 2022, **tutoring usage (6,517) saw a 47% increase** compared with fall 2021. As it relates to supplemental instruction, Athletic Training was added to the lineup as a pilot in fall 2022.

With our focus on Quest 2025, we are making great strides in helping to eliminate the achievement gap. There was a **significant increase (66%) in Black males who attended tutoring in fall 2022** compared to the previous fall; there was a **44% increase in Black females who attended tutoring in fall 2022** compared to the previous fall. Overall, for fall 2022, there was an **astounding 53% increase in the total number of Black students who attended tutoring**

compared with fall 2021. We will continue to focus on increasing the participation of students of color as tutees and tutors.

Finally, MTSU was recently awarded a **five-year, \$1.4 million federal TRIO grant** funded through the US Department of Education to support an **Upward Bound** program. The goal of Upward Bound is to increase the rates at which high school students are graduating as well as the rates at which they are enrolling in and graduating from college. The program will be housed in the Office of Student Success and **will serve up to 60 students** from our **four partner schools**: Community High School and Shelbyville High School in Bedford County, and Smyrna High School and LaVergne High School in Rutherford County.



MURPHY CENTER

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the iconic Murphy Center, we recently kicked off a yearlong celebration of the milestone—including a **\$6 million renovation to modernize the facility for the next 50 years.**

Highlighting the kickoff was a showcase of the new **33,000 square feet of “smart window” dynamic glass** panels that replaced outdated predecessors and now give the 11,500-seat arena a glistening new exterior.

Manufactured by the international company SageGlass, the panels automatically tint and clear in response to the sun, **eliminating the glare and heat** challenges inside Murphy over the years and ensuring that the interior of the building is cool and comfortable for fans and student-athletes.

The roughly two-year glass replacement project, from design to installation, **required 16 semi-trailers to deliver the 1,300 pieces of SageGlass to be installed. Murphy Center now marks the largest installation of dynamic glass in higher education in the U.S.**

Two dozen large **timeline panels**, featuring vintage MTSU photos, have been installed around Murphy Center’s concourse track to provide fans with a self-guided nostalgic look back on the five decades of Murphy Center’s history.

We also unveiled a newly designed **basketball court**. And there’s more improvement to come, as MTSU Athletics officials plan future changes to Murphy Center that include a dedicated primary arena entrance and a new main lobby—part of the overall **Build Blue capital campaign** to raise \$100 million-plus to upgrade the University’s athletics facilities.

Murphy Center is perhaps the most important, and the most meaningful, place on our campus. It is there where so many memories were created and where we celebrated events, happenings, ceremonies, and activities that became milestones in the lives of so many.

The venue also serves as an academic facility, housing departmental offices, classrooms, and dance studios.

Opened in December 1972 and affectionately known as “The Glass House” for its unmistakable four walls of glass exterior, the Charles M. “Bubber” Murphy Athletic Center has served as a campus anchor as home to MTSU men’s and women’s basketball, as well as the venue of choice for countless university and high school graduation ceremonies, concerts, state basketball championships, and other special events.

During its concert heyday, Murphy Center hosted five Elvis performances; music icons such as Elton John, The Who, Stevie Wonder, the Beach Boys, the Eagles, Johnny Cash, The Judds; and many other acts including, more recently, native son and former MTSU student Chris Young.

Proof that Murphy Center is alive and well as a destination concert venue is the fact that country music superstar Wynonna Judd held a concert there this past November.

I’m proud to say that MTSU students helped the Wynonna and friends’ concert come alive. (See next page.)

Students even represented the University on stage—**45 choral students from the School of Music** in the College of Liberal Arts

accompanied Judd on “Love Can Build a Bridge” to close out the show. **Angela Tipps** (’85), MTSU chorale conductor, created a four-part choral arrangement for the song **within 24 hours**, and two students directed the performance.

Sixteen more students worked as paid production assistants for CMT, one of the producers of the event along with Sandbox Productions. More **Journalism and Strategic Media students** were on hand to cover the event for student-run *Sidelines* and WMTS radio outlets.

Clearly Murphy Center is poised to be an attractive venue again after \$6 million in renovations.



Murphy Center is perhaps the most important, and the most meaningful, place on our campus.



THE JUDDS: LOVE IS ALIVE—THE FINAL CONCERT

“The Judds: Love Is Alive—The Final Concert,” filmed for a TV special set to air this March, was filled with True Blue full-circle moments. Judd made a historic homecoming to the venue that **re-created the 1991 farewell concert with her late mother, Naomi**, as Blue Raider community members past and present worked shoulder-to-shoulder to make the star-studded event come together. **More than 50 student workers and more than 20 alumni behind the scenes were involved in the production.**

A team of **21 Media Arts students** worked from MTSU’s Mobile Production Lab, a 40-foot rolling studio with a high-

definition control room and seven cameras, to livestream student-fronted red carpet coverage aired across multiple True Blue TV platforms, including Roku, Apple TV, and Amazon Fire; on NewsChannel 5+; and Facebook.

In front of the camera, MTSU’s Middle Tennessee News **student-produced multimedia news outlet** supplied the talent who interviewed country music icons like seasoned pros. In addition to Judd, the concert featured her musical friends and current tourmates **Ashley McBryde, Brandi Carlile, Kelsea Ballerini, Little Big Town, and Martina McBride**, in a tribute to Naomi Judd.

STUDENT LIFE

During the Fall 2022 semester, our long-standing Connection Point program once again offered an eclectic slate of exciting programs to involve our students with their campus community. While this effort is designed to engage our first-semester freshmen with out-of-classroom activities, upper-class students attended many of the events in large numbers. Some of the events: Rep Your Roots, Fight Song Competition, Crash the Commons, Habitat for Humanity panel build, *Luca* and *Monsters University* movies on the Student Union Commons, Student Organization Fair, MTSU football games, and comedy night with Adam Conover.

The lineup for spring kicked off with the **Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration and Vigil on Jan. 16**. The event included special presentations by MTSU students, alumni, and staff.

Upcoming events include Soup with CSIL (free soup and giveaways); Fraternity and Sorority Meet and Greets; Lanes, Trains, and Automobiles bowling and arcade games; Black History Month and Women's History Month keynote speakers; Student Appreciation Week tailgate; Jimmy Buffett Night-themed men's basketball game; Beach Night-themed women's basketball game; Signature Events concert; and more.

CONNECTION POINT SPRING 2023

MTSU IS YOUR HOME BASE: PREPARE TO CLIMB

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY I AM true BLUE

MLK Celebration and Candlelight Vigil
Monday, January 16 • 6–8 p.m.
Student Union Ballroom
Sponsor: Intercultural and Diversity Affairs
An annual MTSU tradition in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his wife, Coretta Scott King, this tribute is a celebration of their lives and humanitarian contributions. The event will highlight community and campus words of encouragement.

Soup With CSIL
Thursday, January 19 • 11 a.m.–1 p.m.
Student Union 330
Sponsor: Center for Student Involvement and Leadership
Come join CSIL for some hot soups and desserts. We will have great giveaways—T-shirts and college school supplies items. Have your photo taken using our new Lightning and horseshoe wall as a backdrop.

Men's Basketball vs. Charlotte/ Jimmy Buffett Night
Thursday, January 19 • 6 p.m.
Murphy Center
Sponsor: Athletics
Cheer the Blue Raiders as we tip off the start of the spring semester. It's Jimmy Buffett Night, and the first 150 students will receive free Hawaiian shirts!

Sorority Meet and Greet
Monday, January 23 • 11 a.m.–1 p.m.
Student Union Lobby
Sponsors: Fraternity and Sorority Life, College Panhellenic, National Pan-Hellenic Council
Come meet members from College Panhellenic and National Pan-Hellenic sorority chapters. Female students can learn how to join one of our nine sororities at MTSU.

Fraternity Meet and Greet
Tuesday, January 24 • 11 a.m.–1 p.m.
Student Union Lobby
Sponsors: Fraternity and Sorority Life, Interfraternity Council, National Pan-Hellenic Council
Come meet members from the Interfraternity Council and National Pan-Hellenic fraternity chapters. Male students can learn how to join one of our 13 fraternities at MTSU.

Spring Student Organization Fair
Wednesday, January 25 • 1–4 p.m.
Student Union Ballroom
Sponsor: Student Organizations & Service
Pull up to the Student Union Ballroom and meet 100+ student organizations. This is a great time to learn more about how to join various clubs.

Lanes, Trains, and Automobiles Bowling and Arcade Games
Thursday, January 26 • 10 p.m.–midnight
Lanes, Trains, and Automobiles (450 Butler Drive, Murfreesboro)
Sponsors: Campus Recreation, SPARE
Free bowling and arcade games. Transportation will not be provided.

Black History Month Keynote Speaker
Monday, February 27
Student Union Ballroom • 7–9 p.m.
Sponsor: Black History Month Committee, Intercultural and Diversity Affairs
This year's Black History Month keynote speaker is **Ilyasah Shabazz**, daughter of the late Malcolm X. Shabazz has written several books and delivered lectures on the importance of education and empowerment through leadership.

Big Event
Tuesday, February 28 • Noon–4 p.m.
Student Union 330
Sponsor: Student Government Association
Last year, SGA partnered with Meals of Hope and packed 7,500 meals for the Murfreesboro community. This year, we will set an even higher goal. Students, join us to help pack meals and give back to our community.

Women's Basketball vs. North Texas/ Beach Night
Thursday, March 2 • 6 p.m.
Murphy Center
Sponsor: Athletics
Cheer the Lady Raiders vs. North Texas and enjoy Beach Night inside Murphy Center.

Alternative Spring Break
Monday–Thursday, March 6–9
(Application deadline: February 2)
Greater Murfreesboro
Sponsor: Student Organizations & Service
Alternative Spring Break (ASB) gives students the opportunity to make a difference in the community on a local level. ASB is life-changing and is hosted at many universities across the country. Students participate in intensive service experiences that make a true difference in the lives of others. This event will take place across four days. Event details will be available in early 2023 at mtsu.edu/soi/breaks.php.

Welcome Back Movie Night
Thursday, March 16 • 5:30 p.m. doors open 7 p.m. movie starts • 9 p.m. movie ends
Premier 6 Theater, Jackson Heights Plaza
Sponsors: SPARE, New Student and Family Programs, Campus Recreation, University Health Services
All movies at the Premier 6 Theater will be shown free for MTSU students ONLY with their MyMT Event Pass. Limited seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Transportation will not be provided.

Women's History Month Speaker
Thursday, March 23 • 6–7 p.m.
Student Union Ballroom
Sponsors: National Women's History Month, June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students
Join us as we celebrate "Women Who Tell Our Stories," the theme of this year's National Women's History Month. Our keynote speaker

is **Nancy Giles** from CBS. Giles is an actress, a journalist, and an author. Come hear the stories she has to tell.

Relay for Life
Friday, March 24 • 5–8:30 p.m.
MTSU Rec Center
Sponsor: American Cancer Society
Come learn how Relay for Life positively impacts the lives of those living with cancer and help us raise funds to support the American Cancer Society. We will kick off at 5 p.m. with the opening ceremony. The remainder of the event—including basketball shootout, dodgeball, team activities, tables, and lunaria memorial ceremony—goes until 8:30 p.m. Lead a team or just come to support the fight against cancer. Entry donation is \$5 at relayforlife.org/mtsu.

SGA Student Appreciation Week Kickoff Tailgate
Friday, March 31 • Time: TBD
Baseball Field Commons
Sponsor: Student Government Association
Enjoy free food and giveaways, and then head into the stadium to watch MTSU take on Florida International University.

Game of Life
Thursday, April 6 • 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
MTSU Rec Center
Sponsor: MT One Stop, Campus Recreation
Game of Life is a financial literacy event that lets students see how they might balance future salaries and monthly expenses. Game of Life is future Financial Literacy Month.

Walk a Mile in Their Shoes
Tuesday, April 11 • 4–6 p.m.
MTSU Rec Center
Sponsors: June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students, Fraternity and Sorority Life, SPARE, Campus Recreation, Interfraternity Council
Join us as we raise awareness about sexual assault and other instances of power-based violence. Food and event T-shirts will be available while supplies last.

Color the Commons
Thursday, April 20 • 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Student Union Commons
Sponsors: June Anderson Center for Women and Nontraditional Students, MTSU Power of One
Join us for a chalk art contest in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness Month. This event is open to all students, student organizations, and departments to design and color a square in the Student Union Commons. Preregistration information will be available at mtsu.edu/powerof1 or by emailing powerof1@mtsu.edu.

Signature Events Concert
April Date and Time TBA
Murphy Center
Sponsors: Signature Events Committee, Student Government Association, SPARE
Last year, we brought you Jack Harlow. Stay tuned to hear what act will be coming to MTSU in spring 2023!

For a complete list of event details, including updated dates and times, go to mtsu.edu/campuslife/events.php

1022-1260 / Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion or gender identity, or any other category prohibited by law. See our full policy at mtsu.edu/law.

For a detailed calendar, go to:

www.mtsu.edu/campuslife/connectionpoint.php#connectionpoint

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

MTSU TRUE BLUE CORE

MTSU's new General Education curriculum, the True Blue Core, is on schedule for launch in fall 2024. Faculty are hard at work redesigning courses from the current Gen Ed and developing exciting new courses that will give students more choices. The Core features a new focus on student learning outcomes that provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their majors, careers, and lives. Another feature of the Core is **Blueprints**, in which a student can choose thematically related courses that align with their interests and/or major. For more information, gened@mtsu.edu.



The **MT Engage** program geared toward getting students fully immersed in the classroom experience was made a permanent part of the University's second **Quality Enhancement Plan**. Launched in 2016, MT Engage is designed to support students' academic engagement in their courses through investing in faculty development and promoting high-impact teaching practices to better support students from all backgrounds. **The program would not be possible without the support of faculty and staff.** Faculty can get a course MT Engage certified—on a completely voluntary basis. MT Engage courses include active learning practices, such as assignments that are problem-based, collaborative, or involve undergraduate research, and help students reflect on their learning by documenting their ongoing growth in an ePortfolio. **Currently, 336 courses are certified.**

MTSU's 2022–23 Employee Charitable Giving Campaign raised a record-setting amount of **almost \$145,000 pledged**, beating the \$142,500 campaign goal. Faculty and staff once again rose to the occasion, with **830 participants** who demonstrated their True Blue spirit of giving with pledges totaling \$144,906. Even as inflationary pressures have impacted us all, I'm not surprised that our employees recognized that it was more important than ever to give back during this time to assist the most vulnerable among our neighbors and friends throughout the community. MTSU prides itself

on being a good neighbor and finding ways to make this great community even greater. I'm so very grateful to all who participated in another record-setting campaign and committed to share their financial resources with area nonprofit organizations that do such great work in supporting those in need. MTSU's annual Charitable Giving Campaign is led by a committee of faculty and staff volunteers to rally financial support for worthy causes. The campaign is fueled largely by monthly payroll

#trueGIVER

MTSU Charitable Giving Campaign

October 1–November 1, 2022

mtsu.edu/givemtsu

I AM trueBLUE

deductions from employees over the next year, but also allows one-time, lump-sum gifts at the donor's discretion. Participants can designate gifts to 140-plus organizations from a list of 10 independent charities and three federated groups of charities, Creating Healthier Communities, Community Shares, and local United Way organizations.

MTSU again made *U.S. News & World Report's* **Top 100** national list for **Top Performers in Social Mobility** for our efforts to help disadvantaged students reach their educational goals. In its 2022–23 evaluations of 1,500 colleges and universities, the publication **ranked MTSU at No. 82 nationally for social mobility; No. 156 for Top Public Schools; No. 130 for Best Undergraduate Engineering Programs** (at schools where doctorate not offered); and **No. 206 in Nursing**. The University also was ranked **No. 299 among the top National Universities**. MTSU, which first made *U.S. News'* Top 100 in Social Mobility in 2020, devotes considerable effort to serve first-generation and underrepresented college students.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



MTSU's College of Education **was one of only 32 institutions** to be recognized by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation for quality as an education preparation provider. This recognition shows that **we are among the top educator preparation providers in the nation.**

About 70 local teachers arrived on the MTSU campus Sept. 27 to enjoy the College of Education's inaugural **Teacher Appreciation** event. MTSU would not be able to effectively prepare teacher candidate students without professional teachers serving as mentors or without local district support.

The **Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity at MTSU opened in 2022**, led by Director **Michelle Stevens** (pictured above). The center aims to cultivate an inclusive and diverse College of Education by **intentionally recruiting diverse faculty, teacher candidates, and educational personnel** from a multitude of backgrounds. Tennessee's teacher workforce is not representative of the students being served. **About 38% of Tennessee students are people of color, but only 14% of Tennessee teachers are.** Data shows a particularly concerning demographic mismatch between Black male students and teachers: **only 2% of teachers are Black men.** The center also equips current College of Education students, faculty, and staff with cultural competency training opportunities.

For MTSU News any time
MTSUNews.com

HONORS COLLEGE

The Honors College will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, beginning with Homecoming festivities in fall 2023 and more activities through spring 2024.

During the 2021–22 academic year, more MTSU students than ever before applied for national scholarships and fellowships, resulting in a **record number of Gilman Scholarships (20) and Critical Language Scholarships (3).** The University also had students selected for Fulbright, Goldwater, Japanese Exchange Teaching (JET), and National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) awards.

Each year four outstanding MTSU students are selected to receive campus awards, and this year **all four are Honors students.** In addition, one of the four also received a state award. **Winton Cooper** and **Kap Paull** claimed the President's Award and the Provost's Award, respectively. Cooper, the 2021–22 Student Government Association (SGA) president and an Environmental Science major,



Winton Cooper



Kap Paull



Cynthia Torres



Dara Zwemer

received the President's Award. Paull, majoring in Allied Health Science, received the Provost's Award. Two students from the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences, **Dara Zwemer** and **Cynthia Torres**, won two other campuswide awards. Zwemer, a Buchanan Fellow and Psychology major, garnered the Robert C. LaLance Jr. Award in recognition of her determination, sacrifices, and contribution to the community. Torres, an Honors Transfer Fellow and Psychology major, was recognized with the Community Service Award. Torres, who has organized and

facilitated various support groups to benefit those touched by addiction, infidelity, and trauma, was also awarded a Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Award and accompanying \$1,000 cash prize in the spring. The statewide awards, created to recognize higher education students and faculty/staff, are named for the late state representative who was known for his compassion and good humor.

COLLEGE OF BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCES

MTSU's first four budding medical school students successfully advanced in a special partnership with **Meharry Medical College's** School of Medicine in Nashville. Maria Hite of La Vergne, Claire Ritter of Nashville, Pierce Creighton of Lascassas, and Kirolos Michael of Brentwood completed their first three years

of study in prescribed undergraduate premedical school curriculum and are now several months into four years of medical school study. It's all part of the **Medical School Early Acceptance Program**, a collaboration between MTSU's College of Basic and Applied Sciences and Meharry. **The program intends to increase the number of primary care physicians serving medically underserved populations and alleviate health care disparities in rural Tennessee.** Another four MTSU students are in their third year of the program. Eight are in their second year and four in their first, for a total of 20 current program participants. The program was announced in 2018.



MEHARRY PARTNERSHIP

Maria Hite of La Vergne, **Claire Ritter** of Nashville, **Pierce Creighton** of Lascassas, and **Kirolos Michael** of Brentwood completed their first three years of study in prescribed undergraduate premedical school curriculum and are now several months into four years of medical school study.

THE FLIGHT SCHOOL

With the rise in demand for flight training, the MTSU Flight School has found it necessary to implement a multitiered plan for fleet growth to keep up. At the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester, the department took possession of two additional Piper Seminole aircraft. With the addition of these two aircraft, we will be able to reach levels of multi-engine training never before seen at the University. **We now have the largest multi-engine fleet and the largest total fleet in MTSU history.** The MTSU Flight School currently maintains a fleet of 36 training aircraft, five of which are Piper Seminoles. The Aerospace program celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2023.



JONES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



With an extensive background in international accounting and licensed as both a lawyer and CPA, **Jarett “Jerry” Decker** hopes to bring his global and legal experience to bear as the new **Joey A. Jacobs Chair of Excellence in Accounting** and professor of practice within MTSU’s Jones College of

Business. A former head of the **World Bank’s Centre for Financial Reporting Reform** in Vienna, Decker has advised governments on reforms to improve corporate accounting, auditing, and governance in more than 30 developing and transitional countries. Decker also served as the first deputy director and chief trial counsel for the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, created by Congress in the wake of the Enron and WorldCom accounting scandals. Prior to that, Decker was senior trial counsel for the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in Chicago.

Jones College of Business launched the **Lifelong Learning Series**, a program which provides the general public with timely presentations about current topics in business, similar to TED Talks. We make them available via live, in-person attendance and livestreaming. We also archive the presentations on **our college YouTube channel** for the convenience of anyone who wants to view them.

Jones College continues to develop market-driven programs. In 2021–22, we enhanced our program in **Professional Selling** by establishing a dedicated center that is part of the University Sales Center Alliance (USCA). This alignment with USCA is already making our program better known nationally, and it gives our students more opportunities to shine via national sales competitions. In other areas of Marketing, our faculty built an M.B.A. concentration in **Strategic Marketing Analytics** and an undergraduate concentration in **Digital Marketing**, both of which launched in fall 2022.

We’ve also embarked on an effort to create a B.S. degree in **Cybersecurity**. Our Information Systems program has always been the locus of IT security education at MTSU. It makes perfect sense to offer a B.S. in Cybersecurity to meet the enormous demand for skilled security professionals.

We have created a standalone **M.S. in Supply Chain Management** to accompany our B.B.A. in Supply Chain Management. The Greater Nashville region is a hotbed of logistical activity. We made sure the master’s program offers higher-level skills to undergraduate students who may have majored in Supply Chain Management, either at MTSU or another university.

Our new **Human Resource Management** concentration is part of the revamped **B.B.A. in Management and**

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS

MTSU has entered an agreement with **Belmont University** to provide a preferred admission program through Belmont's **College of Law** for qualifying students. The program enables students to earn their B.A. or B.S. in Political Science with a Pre-Law concentration and their Juris Doctor (J.D.) in only six years. Students will complete most of their undergraduate degrees prior to admission to the J.D. program and, upon completion of requisite coursework during the first year of their J.D. program at Belmont, students will fulfill remaining requirements of their MTSU undergraduate degrees.

COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

Professors **Benjamin Stickle** and **Carter Smith** received **\$800,000 in federal grant funding** for their work on "Tennessee Bureau of Investigations: Tennessee's Human Trafficking Task Force Initiative." The award came from the U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance Enhanced Collaborative Model (EMC) Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking: Supporting Law Enforcement's Role. Stickle additionally received **\$705,000 in federal grant funding** for his work on "Addressing the Needs of Incarcerated Parents and their Minor Children" from the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.



Benjamin Stickle



Carter Smith

Elizabeth Whalen earned the **Best Paper Award** at the International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators Conference for "You can't win if you don't play! Perceptions of event gamification on behavioral outcomes."

Chandra Story received a grant from the Tennessee Department of Health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) for Building Community Capacity to Address Mental Illness in the context of COVID-19.



Leadership. It is drawing so many students that the Management faculty are working on a Human Resource Management concentration in the M.S. in Management.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

The new B.S. in **Public Writing and Rhetoric** added its first students. **Eric Detweiler** from the Department of English is serving as director of the interdisciplinary program, which launched in fall 2022.

Liberal Arts hosted the **Holocaust Studies Conference**—MTSU's 14th biennial academic gathering of Holocaust Studies scholars and Holocaust survivors. The 2022 event culminated with an address from **Holocaust survivor Sonja Dubois**, who shared her story as well as the journey to completing her memoir, *Finding Schifrah*.



Elizabeth Whalen



Rebecca Oldham



Gina Pisut



Chandra Story



Kristi Julian



Tom Brinhaupt

Rebecca Oldham was selected as the 2022 recipient of the **Emerging Teaching/Mentorship Award** for the National Council on Family Relations as a new family science faculty who has demonstrated excellence in teaching and mentorship practices.

Kristi Julian, Interior Design professor and program coordinator in the Department of Human Sciences, was honored with the **2022 Keith Hooks Volunteer Excellence Award** in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the Council for Interior Design Accreditation and interior design education.

As part of their partnership with the National Retail Federation (NRF), **Gina Pisut** and the Textiles, Merchandising, and Design program student group Fashion and Design Students (FaDS) attended the **NRF Foundation Student Program** in New York City Jan. 12–15. At this event, students had the opportunity to learn from retail executives in marketing, merchandising, talent, entrepreneurship, sustainability, diversity and inclusion, supply chain, and technology as well as explore various career paths in the retail industry and meet with dozens of recruiters from their favorite brands.

Here are some stats from the School of Nursing:

- B.S.N. program ranked **213 out of 1,500 nationwide**
- M.S.N. program ranked **No. 3 in Tennessee**
- **95% first-time pass rate** for NCLEX (state board exam) for 2022
- **94% job placement** prior to graduation for 2022
- **\$70,000** awarded in scholarships for Nursing students

The “self-talk” going through MTSU Psychology Professor **Tom Brinhaupt**’s mind was clear on his face as he walked among his applauding colleagues to accept the University’s highest teaching honor. Brinhaupt, who has spent 32 years in the Department of Psychology and who specializes in “self-talk”—the internal conversations we have with ourselves—was the **2022 recipient of the MTSU Foundation’s Career Achievement Award**.

WALKER LIBRARY

Walker Library was busier than ever last fall with regular **daily visits upward of 3,500**. From August to the end of the Fall 2022 semester, users visited the library **268,466** times.

Walker Library also partnered with ITD to shift the circulation of **wireless hotspots** to Library Technology. We cataloged and integrated 250 wireless hotspots during the month of September and checked all of them out for the semester. In addition, we received 25 additional **laptops** that we circulated to students for two-week loan periods. As we replaced existing laptops, we increased this number to 40. In addition, the library offered another 45 laptops available for three-day checkouts.

Karen Reed was hired as the new research and data librarian. We are excited for this position to help us work more collaboratively with faculty on their research and data needs.



Karen Reed

User Services collaborated with Mark McLeod’s **3D Design** class as it aligns with our strategic priority to bring student art and creative works into the library.

The **Anti-Monument Art Exhibit** went on display Dec. 1 in the Walker Library Reference Area. It has drawn a lot of attention from students already and will remain on display through February.

COLLEGE OF MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

Last fall, on the new **extended reality XR stage** in the University’s Bragg Media and Entertainment Building, classes began preparing students from the department’s Animation and Video and Film Production programs to reach new heights in virtual production for film,

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHTS



New space for the Commercial Songwriting program in the Miller Education Center

television, and animation. The XR-capable facility, a roughly **\$1 million investment**, is the only one at a Tennessee university and among few such facilities **at any university anywhere in the world.**

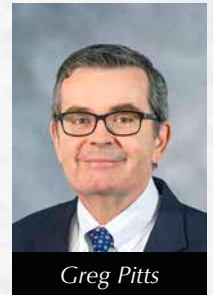
The **Commercial Songwriting program** moved to its home in MTSU's Miller Education Center. The new space features state-of-the-art songwriting classrooms along with private writing studios where students can hone their skills and their compositions. At the core of the center is a welcoming gathering area called the **Sandy Knox Lyric Lounge**, encouraging collaborative conversation and productive downtime.

Katie Foss took over as director of the **School of Journalism and Strategic Media** from **Greg Pitts**, who stepped down as of January. **Marie Barnas**, who has been serving as interim chair for the **Department of Media Arts** since Professor Billy



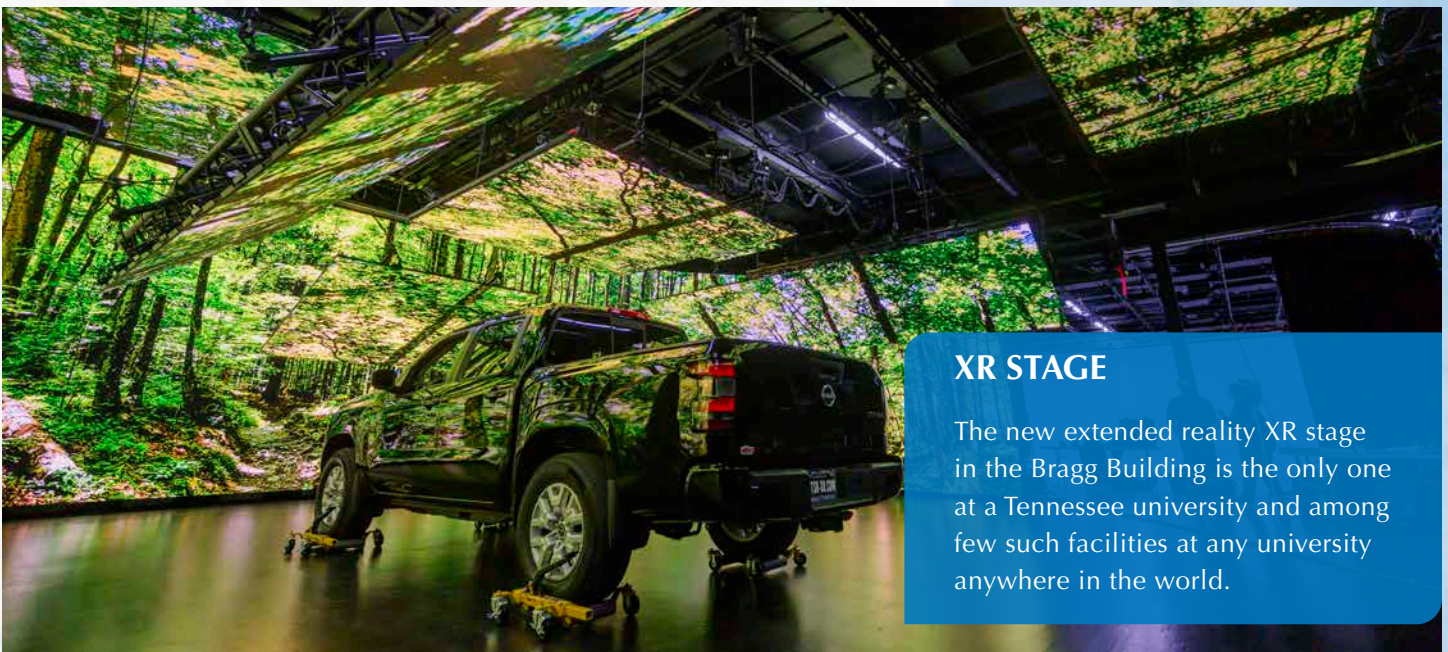
Katie Foss

Pittard stepped down last May, has been named permanent chair of the department.



Greg Pitts

MTSU's Department of Recording Industry—and the College of Media and Entertainment that houses it—are marking the eighth year on *Billboard* magazine's latest **international list of top music business schools**, once again earning acclaim for the program's diversity, depth, and longevity. According to the industry publication, "opportunities abound" for students' professional development at MTSU, thanks to participation in events such as Bonnaroo and the CMA Music Festival; the presence of an active on-campus music venue, the Chris Young Café; and the student-run record label, Match Records.



XR STAGE

The new extended reality XR stage in the Bragg Building is the only one at a Tennessee university and among few such facilities at any university anywhere in the world.



IN MEMORIAM

Alumnus and Board of Trustees member **Joey Jacobs** died on Saturday, Jan. 14.

We will never forget the tremendous impact and accomplishments of Trustee Jacobs, a strong advocate

and supporter of his alma mater and a mentor and role model to the students of our Jennings A. Jones College of Business.

My wife, Elizabeth, and I will miss his counsel and friendship and the University community extends its deepest condolences to Trustee Jacobs' family.

Jacobs served as chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee for the MTSU Board of Trustees.

Athletics Director Chris Massaro called Jacobs a cornerstone of our Build Blue Campaign and a key reason for its success.

Jacobs was honored in 2013 with MTSU's Jennings A. Jones Champion of Free Enterprise Award in recognition of his tenure as chairman and CEO of Psychiatric Solutions Inc. He also served in various executive roles at HCA Healthcare, Quorum Health Corp., and Cumberland Pharmaceuticals.

He also established the Joey A. Jacobs Chair of Excellence in Accountancy in the Jones College, which provides a national and international presence for MTSU in the field of accounting.

TECHNOLOGY

A more modern **intranet portal** is being implemented, which will change how students, faculty, and staff interact with technology using the user-friendly dashboard. Users will discover efficiency by logging into one portal to access their SSO-enabled applications such as Banner, D2L, Navigate, and many others. The tentative soft launch is May.

The new **BLUEWIFI platform** is currently implemented in the following buildings: Telecommunications, School of Concrete and Construction Management, Campus Recreation, Honors College, Bragg Media and Entertainment, and Ellington Human Sciences.

Upgrades to the campus wired network in fall 2022 included the hardware connecting the campus to the internet and the IP address management system. Starting this spring, upgrades will include housing and Walker Library, which bring critical improvements to modernize the campus network and position us for future growth.

The University data center's **UPS upgrades** have started, with completion targeted for early 2023. The upgrades

will minimize the impact of power disruptions, **ensuring essential IT services remain available** to the campus community.

The **AI chatbot, Lightning**, went live in April 2022 in eight key areas on the MTSU website. It has expanded to **almost 40 key areas/departments and helped answer 27,522 questions from students and others**. In 2023, Lightning will expand to nearly every page on the MTSU website.

The Center for Technologies and Training offered **35 workshops** in the fall covering a variety of topics, such as Microsoft Teams, Planner, Bookings, LinkedIn Learning, Panopto, and, of course, D2L.



Hi, I'm **Lightning Chat**, MTSU's new chatbot virtual assistant. I provide support **any time, any day**. Have general questions for **One Stop, Admissions, Advising, Student Life**, or the **Veterans Center**? Ask me!

ASK LIGHTNING

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY. I AM trueBLUE


UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Because of stagnation in state funding over the years, perhaps even more so for universities like MTSU that have a higher percentage of first-generation college students who rely more on scholarships to complete their educations, **I have consistently emphasized that gifts from our alumni and friends have become essential to our success.**

Supporters of the University have clearly heard that message. MTSU boasted a record fundraising year for 2021–22, bringing in more than \$17.2 million in private donations to support the University’s educational mission. This represents a 50% increase over 2021. And it is easily the biggest fundraising year the University has ever had—more than \$3 million above our previous record year.

Here are some highlights:

20% increase in donor participation	7,600 donors (almost 1,000 more than the previous year)
Record \$8.9 million in cash gifts	Increase in giving for almost every academic college
More than double the donations for the College of Liberal Arts in the past year	300% year-over-year growth for Athletics during the 2022 fiscal year



Considering the impacts of COVID, inflation, and a volatile stock market, the fact that MTSU was able to reach such a remarkable milestone is a **testament to the dedication of our supporters, as well as the excellent work of MTSU’s University Advancement staff.** To say the least, we are incredibly grateful for

the support and for the ever-growing sense of shared purpose and the palpable momentum that moves this great University forward.

MTSU’s development staff does an excellent job of encouraging people (if they wish) to designate specifically where their donations will go. Helping shepherd all those fundraising dollars is the **MTSU Foundation**, managed by a volunteer Board of Trustees to oversee all private gifts to the University. The board elected a new president, **Ronald Roberts** (’84, ’91), in 2022 and appointed four new alumni trustees.



Ronald Roberts

The bottom line is that our ongoing fundraising is having a transformative effect on programs and students across campus. For more information about the Development Office and the MTSU Foundation, or to make a gift yourself, visit mtsu.edu/development.



The 6th **Annual True Blue Give** will take place **Feb. 14, 15, and 16**. Started in 2018, True Blue Give rallies Blue Raider faithful to invest in the people and programs that make MTSU special. For three straight days, we encourage people to **make a gift online or by text** investing in their favorite college, department, or program and its people. **In the first five years, alumni have given more than \$2.3 million during the True Blue Give.** That is money directly invested in our people, elevating our programs and transforming our university. Want to show your love for something at MTSU? Go to mtsu.edu/truebluegive.

MTSU recently named **Mark Clark** executive director for development, a position responsible for leading fundraising efforts for the University. A west Tennessee native who most recently worked at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Clark supervises MTSU’s constituent-based development officers in his new role, each serving an academic college, as well as the annual giving and stewardship team. Clark can be reached at mark.clark@mtsu.edu or 615-904-8409.



For fall 2022, MTSU enrolled 167 new international students. This represented an increase of 9.15% from the previous fall intake.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

International students are returning to the United States after a significant drop during the pandemic. Open Doors 2022 data reveals that international students studying across the U.S. during the 2021–22 academic year supported more than 335,000 jobs and contributed \$33.8 billion to the U.S. economy—a **\$5.5 billion increase in economic activity compared to the prior academic year.** At the Tennessee District 4 state level, 855 international students contributed more than \$28.6 million dollars, which supported 282 jobs.

For fall 2022, **MTSU enrolled 167 new international students.** This represented an increase of 9.15% from the previous fall intake. Saudi Arabia has consistently been a top sender of students at MTSU and currently contributes 115 international students. Displacing China, Nigeria represents the second-largest international student population with 52. This figure represents a 25% increase from the previous fall.

To compete for international students in a very competitive market, MTSU International Affairs has instituted a **new comprehensive international student recruitment plan** with a worldwide approach to recruiting. Through virtual fairs, on-site college fairs, international school visits, a network of international agents, webinars, institutional partnerships, and social media, **MTSU has reached nearly 100,000 prospective students.** The Blue Raider image is present throughout the world on nearly every continent. Our product is popular and attractive.

We are determined to remain a top destination for international students in the U.S. We have a welcoming, friendly international student atmosphere where all students are respected, valued, and appreciated. Given these factors, we can expect to see continued growth in our international student numbers for years to come.

RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

Here are some highlights from the College of Graduate Studies:

- Launched M.S. in Supply Chain Management degree in fall 2022.
- Launched M.S. in Data Science degree in fall 2022.
- Increased all graduate assistant stipends by \$500.
- M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies program director, **Marie Patterson**, named TAPA Physician Assistant of the Year.
- Doctoral student in Molecular Biosciences was the **first recipient** of the American Chemical Society's Division of Professional Relations (PROF) Leadership Development Award.



And here are some highlights from the University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs:

- In partnership with ITD and faculty across campus, launched proposal and grant management modules in **Cayuse**. The remaining modules will be launched by the end of the spring semester. This system modernizes our Office of Research and Sponsored Programs operations and lays a solid foundation for increased external funding as an **R2 institution**.
- MTSU doubled its proposals for NSF funding from July 1–Dec. 31 with more than **\$10 million in proposed projects** thus far in FY23 (over the first six months in FY22)
- Submitted external funding proposals have increased by approximately **39%** this year as compared with the first two quarters of last fiscal year.
- **ORSP** is currently managing a grant portfolio of just over **\$59 million in external funding** for FY23.

Save the Date

trueBLUE GIVE



Give to anything you love on campus, including:

- U College, Department, or Program
- U Band of Blue
- U Student Organizations
- U Athletics
- U Scholarships
- U Safety Net Fund for Homeless Students
- U Student Mental Health Counseling

February 14, 15, and 16

FEELING THE LOVE RIGHT NOW?
GO TO MTSU.EDU/TRUEBLUEGIVE



DANIELS CENTER

I would like to continue highlighting how we are building partnerships to spread the message of the Daniels Center, the largest and most comprehensive veterans and military family center on a college campus in the state of Tennessee.

We are a tremendous school for military-connected students; we will certainly take good care of you here, and you will get a great education.

BUT you do not need to go to MTSU to be assisted by the Daniels Center. **We help any military-connected person in need.**

AND the help we give you does not have to be school related. We are constantly helping people get connected to the VA, maximize their benefits, and find jobs and housing.

This past semester, we had a wonderful **Veterans Impact Celebration** featuring **Holly Thompson** and **Keni Thomas**, a **9/11 Remembrance**, and an Artist Reception, in addition to all of our academic events.

We have also continued and expanded the relationships we have been building with Tennessee icons, such as:

- Music City Grand Prix
- Grand Ole Opry (center leader and retired Lt. Gen. Keith Huber took the Opry stage again last year, this time with Craig Morgan, to let people know about the Daniels Center)
- Nashville Predators
- Nashville Sounds
- Nashville SC
- Nashville Speedway

These partnerships built around events not only provide entertainment for our veterans and military-connected students but also raise awareness of the center and the assistance that it provides veterans and their families, regardless of whether they attend MTSU.



0123-1488 / 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 any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs, and activities sponsored by MTSU. The Interim Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and Compliance has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and can be reached at Cope Administration Building 116, 1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132; Christy.Sigler@mtsu.edu; or 615-898-2185. The MTSU policy on non-discrimination can be found at mtsu.edu/iec.



MTSU ARTS

In late December, MTSU's **True Blue TV** featured a 24-hour marathon of the 2022 edition of *Joys of the Season*, the annual holiday-themed arts special that showcases performances by College of Liberal Arts students and faculty. True Blue TV began airing the show at noon Christmas Eve and concluded at noon Christmas Day. This was the second year that the University's public affairs and live events television channel preempted its regular programming for the marathon.

Joys of the Season began in 2015 as an evening of live performances and displays in Tucker Theatre on campus to express the University's appreciation to the community for its decades of support. The program took a pandemic-forced hiatus in 2020. For 2021, as the health risks for public gatherings continued, organizers realized that they could reach a wider audience and keep everyone safer for future arts events by taking the 2021 *Joys* to the screen.

That first broadcast, which **earned national Telly Awards for cultural programming** and its opening segment, also generated such a positive response that MTSU chose to take its season's greetings on television and online again for 2022.

Looking ahead at the MTSU Arts calendar, please make plans to attend these events:

- Feb. 2, 7:30 p.m., Hinton Hall, **Joe Davidian Trio** concert as part of the 22nd Jazz Artist Series
- Feb. 25, 7:30 p.m., **MTSU Arts Celebration Concert** in Tucker Theatre: Broadway star **Laura Osnes** will headline the concert and be joined by students and faculty from our fine and performing arts programs as we celebrate the best of MTSU Arts!
- March 13–31, **ceramics showcase** in Todd Art Gallery, featuring regionally and nationally recognized American clay artists from the Pacific Northwest to New England
- April 6–8, Tucker Theatre, **Cabaret**
- April 20–22, Tucker Theatre, **Spring Dance Concert**

For additional events and details of the 2022–23 season, visit: mtsu.edu/mtsuarts.

MTSU Arts PATRON SOCIETY

In 2011, we established MTSU Arts to provide a singular brand through which the University community could deliver our many outstanding art offerings to middle Tennessee. Literally hundreds of performances, exhibitions, and concerts are held annually through MTSU Arts in our Art, Dance, Music, and Theatre programs. Our students' artistic expressions demonstrate the transformative power of education and the arts. Just as our students enrich their lives by showcasing their skills, we invite you to enrich yours by being an MTSU Arts Patron.

2022–23 Patron benefits:

- First to know about MTSU Arts Events
- Exclusive access to in-person performances, concerts, exhibitions, and events
- Opportunities to schedule private reservations to view Todd Art Gallery exhibits
- Patron recognition on website and at on-campus events

MTSU Arts Patrons Society was created to enhance opportunities for students in our performing and fine arts programs. When you become a member of the MTSU Arts Patrons Society, you support students with:

- Scholarships to educational workshops and conferences
- Guest artist workshops and student art exhibits
- Theatre performances and concerts produced by students
- Student music recording projects

We cannot wait to welcome you back to campus! To join or renew your support of MTSU Arts for 2022–23, you can use the enclosed card or make your donation at mtsu.edu/mtsuarts.

Visit mtsu.edu/mtsuarts for up-to-date information on the current season.



ATHLETICS

Blue Raiders don't just excel on the playing fields; they also excel in the classroom. Check out these stats!

FALL 2022

221 of 341 (65%) of all student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher GPA	147 (43%) of all student-athletes made the Dean's List by earning a 3.5 GPA or higher
59 (17%) of all student-athletes had a perfect 4.0 GPA	13 of 15 teams had a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher
Golf had the highest men's team GPA of 3.59	Basketball had the highest women's team GPA of 3.71
Semester GPA for all student-athletes: 3.178	Cumulative GPA for all student-athletes: 3.143

In addition, MTSU's NCAA **Graduation Success Rate** for 2021–22 **set a new school record** at 94 percent, as announced by the NCAA on Nov. 15. It's the **ninth straight year** MTSU has either equaled or set a new school record. The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) is a four-year measure of freshmen and athletic transfers who entered the University as freshmen in 2015–16. This marks the 10th straight year that MTSU has scored above 80%. The last 10 GSR scores for Middle Tennessee have been 94, 93, 93, 92, 89, 88, 87, 87, 87, and 82. The Blue Raiders also ranked **second out of the 14 teams** in Conference USA, trailing only private institution Rice (95). Rice,

94%

10th straight year

Ranked 2nd

MTSU, University of Alabama–Birmingham (all with 94), and Marshall (92) were the only C-USA schools with scores higher than 90. **MTSU had six programs register a perfect 100 score:** men's basketball, men's tennis, men's cross country and track, women's golf, soccer, and volleyball. Football was

perfect 100

Tied for 5th

next in line with an impressive 95. **The Blue Raiders' 95 in football tied for fifth nationally** (Northwestern 97, Boston College 97, Florida 96, Vanderbilt 96, MTSU 95, Duke 95) and easily led the way in Conference USA as Rice was second at 93.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

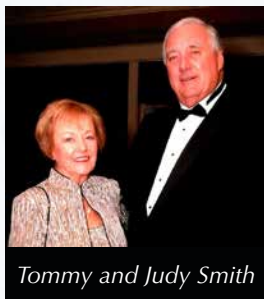
The Blue Raider football team upset the No. 25-ranked University of Miami 45-31 on Sept. 24 at Hard Rock Stadium in a game MTSU controlled wire to wire. **It was the program's first-ever win against a team ranked in the AP Top 25.** The Blue Raiders finished the regular season with a record of 7-5, which resulted in an invitation to the **EasyPost Hawai'i Bowl** in Honolulu on Christmas Eve. In that game, MTSU fought and clawed back into the game, **securing a win** behind the clutch foot of sophomore Zeke Rankin, whose 37-yard field goal pushed the Blue Raiders to the 25-23 victory.





MTSU Athletics inducted six former student-athletes into the **Blue Raider Hall of Fame** on Oct. 14 on the lawn in front of the Emmett and Rose Kennon Sports Hall of Fame. The Class of 2022 featured Blue Raiders from four different decades, with inductees recognized for their on-the-field achievements and for being outstanding representatives of the MTSU community. Inductees were **Leslie Clark Vance** (volleyball, 2006–09); **Krystle Horton** (women’s basketball, 2003–07); **Kevin Kanaskie** (men’s basketball, 2006–09); **Sandy McMillan Neal** (women’s tennis, 1973–76); **Bryan Peck** (baseball, 1999–2000); and **Don Thomas** (football, 1985–88).

The lobby of the new Student-Athlete Performance Center at MTSU will be named after **Tommy and Judy Smith***, thanks to a generous and transformational gift from the Smith family announced Oct. 20. The **\$1 million investment from the Smith family** was made in support of the Blue Raider Athletic Association’s Build Blue campaign. Separately, former Blue Raider student-athlete **Chase Miller**** made a **six-figure donation** to the Build Blue campaign on Dec. 7. Miller was a member of the men’s basketball program from 2015 to 2019. The Miller gift gives him naming rights



Tommy and Judy Smith



Chase Miller



to the men’s basketball head coach’s office and will go toward Phase II of the project, which is the Murphy Center renovation.

MTSU women’s basketball team dominated then No. 18-ranked Louisville on their way to a 67-49 win in Murphy Center on Dec. 4. The victory marked the Lady Raiders’ first win over a ranked opponent since Dec. 28, 2011, when MTSU knocked off No. 6 Kentucky 70-58 at Murphy Center. It’s the **11th win in program history over a ranked team** (fourth under head coach Rick Insell) and the sixth ranked win inside of Murphy Center.***



* photo courtesy of the Smith family

** photo by MTSU Athletic Communications

*** bottom photo by Maya Lewis, MTSU Athletic Communications