

Dr. Sidney A. McPhee


January 20, 2015



## WELCOME TO THE SPRING 2015 SEMESTER!

I hope you and your family enjoyed a wonderful holiday break, and I look forward to working with you in 2015.

Each semester's beginning is a good time to reflect on recent accomplishments and look ahead to future opportunities. I hope this newsletter is informative and useful in that regard.

I welcome your feedback! Please send comments to [Sidney.McPhee@mtsu.edu](mailto:Sidney.McPhee@mtsu.edu). I 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 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.

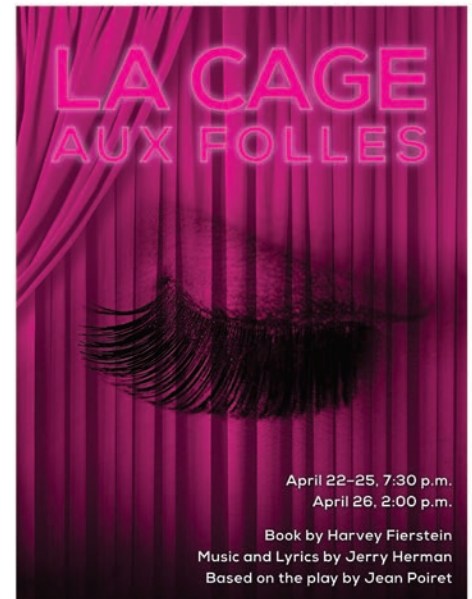
True Blue!

## STRONG START FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

There is already evidence that MTSU's **Quest for Student Success** is paying off. It's no small feat that **MTSU achieved increases in retention in fall 2014** that included an increase of 2 percent in the retention rate for new freshmen and a more than 1 percent increase in the retention of all students, both undergraduate and graduate. My thanks to the deans, advisors, and faculty for their hard work in achieving this progress!

The **Quest** initiative is a series of reforms launched last year to increase retention and graduation through changes such as academic course redesigns, enhanced advising, and new student data-tracking software. We developed this program to complement and reinforce Gov. Bill Haslam's Drive to 55, which seeks to increase the percentage of Tennesseans with postsecondary degrees or certificates to 55 percent.

One component of the Quest unveiled late last year is the **Student Success Advantage** plan, which has the tagline "Graduate in Four and Get More." The plan will supplement HOPE Lottery Scholarships by \$1,000 for incoming students who seek a



**Tucker Theatre, Boutwell Dramatic Arts Building**  
For tickets, visit [www.mtsu.edu/mtsarts](http://www.mtsu.edu/mtsarts) or call 1-888-71-TICKETS.  
MTSU student tickets are FREE with student ID at the box office.

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ART • DANCE • MUSIC • THEATRE

**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

Don't forget to support the incredible array of activities and events happening daily at MTSU, including our outstanding MTSU Arts offerings such as *La Cage Aux Folles*. See page 17.

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I AM *true*  
**BLUE**

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State Sen. Bill Ketron (left) and MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee (center) present Guangxi Vice President Shang Nahong with a medallion at a meeting in Nanning, China.

## East Meets Middle

The partnership between MTSU and **Guangxi University** will allow 140 students from the south China institution eventually to come to Murfreesboro. Fifty-three students are expected to study finance, 34 plan to study business administration, and 46 intend to study mathematics. This makes Guangxi University, with enrollment of more than 24,000 students, one of MTSU's most productive and successful partners in just one year. Students will enroll in a newly developed three-plus-two program, which will allow Guangxi students to finish undergraduate degrees and earn graduate degrees at MTSU. The relationship between the schools began in May 2013 when President Sidney A. McPhee and State Sen. Bill Ketron ('76) visited Guangxi and announced the opening of a recruitment office.



## Not So Run-of-the-Mill

MTSU's exercise science experts have worked wonders with people who suffer from incomplete spinal cord injuries. Now the

### National Institutes of Health

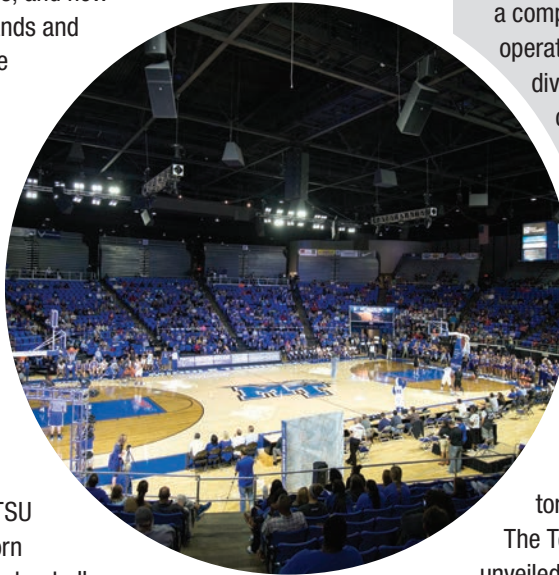
(NIH) has given them the opportunity to perform a comprehensive study that could change how health professions treat these patients, who retain some sensation or motor function. With a \$388,894 NIH grant, Drs. **Don Morgan** and **Sandy**

**Stevens** have been recruiting, testing, and following up with clients suitable for treatment in MTSU's nationally recognized underwater treadmill laboratory. Participants will help the scientists determine the effect of underwater treadmill training on mobility, health, and quality of life of the partially paralyzed. The study is unusual for a university not connected to a college of medicine or a teaching hospital. According to Morgan, "We're doing work here at MTSU that, as far as I know, is not being done anywhere else in the world at this level."

Drs. Don Morgan and Sandy Stevens work with John Robert.

## New Look for Murphy Center

The \$12.64-million renovation of **Murphy Center** was completed just before the opening of men's and women's basketball for 2014. Gone is the waffle ceiling, and new lights are a noticeable improvement. Window shades, a new HVAC system, better acoustics, and new concession stands and restrooms were included in the renovation. Concurrent with the building's reopening was the announcement of the signing of a five-year contract with Nike. Some MTSU teams have worn Nike apparel, but not all sports were officially sponsored.



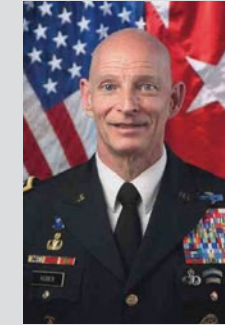
## Horse Sense

MTSU's **Horse Science Center** and **Tennessee Miller Coliseum** hosted national and regional conferences on equine-assisted activities and therapies and therapeutic horsemanship in August 2014. Therapeutic horsemanship helps people with a wide range of emotional, cognitive, and physical challenges. The Horse Science program has been a pioneer in providing equine-assisted activities and therapies to veterans, particularly in its work with the Alvin C. York Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center in Murfreesboro.



## Taking Command

Lieutenant General Keith M. Huber, who recently retired from the U.S. Army, joins MTSU this semester as senior advisor for veterans and leadership initiatives, focused on examining our policies and practices for the recruitment and student success of veterans. His 38 years of service included most recently command of Combined Joint Interagency Task Force 435 in Afghanistan. He also served as a company commander, battalion operations officer, brigade and division operations officer, battalion commander, and director of civil-military affairs with the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell.



## Safety First

MTSU recently helped create an emergency communications center that will provide live, high-definition satellite uplinks that government agencies and TV stations can use to broadcast information during tornadoes, floods, and other public health emergencies. The Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) unveiled the Multi-Agency Joint Information Center (MAJIC) in October 2014. Staff from the College of Education's **Center for Educational Media** and the College of Mass Communication's **Department of Electronic Media Communication** shared technical expertise to properly equip the information center. TEMA director David Purkey said the partnership could lead to valuable experience for MTSU student interns at his agency.

## From Flora to Pharma

MTSU signed an agreement extending its research partnership with the world's largest medicinal herb garden through 2021. The pact with **Guangxi Botanical Garden of Medicinal Plants** also secures MTSU's worldwide rights, excluding China, to patent and market products developed in the partnership. The partners agreed to a 50-50 split of profits from the collaboration. The exclusive agreement began in 2011 between the Tennessee Center for Botanical Medicine Research at MTSU and Guangxi Botanical Garden to hasten the development of Western medicines from plant extracts. Chinese researchers cultivate and prepare extracts that MTSU scientists screen to determine their promise. Using traditional Chinese medicine to treat disease is gaining awareness in Western cultures. An analysis of 52 plant extracts recently provided by the garden identified 29 with promising results, including 12 with anti-cancer potential, eight with indications of anti-inflammatory properties, and one that may be useful to treat diabetes. Almost 40 analyses last year showed promise in the treatment of cancer, viral infections, and other ailments.

## STUDENT SUCCESS

*continued from page 1*

four-year degree and stay on track to graduate on time. Our University will provide a \$500 supplemental scholarship to students receiving the HOPE Scholarship after each of their first two years. Students must remain eligible for the HOPE Scholarship to get the award from MTSU.

Under the plan, we will provide what we call a **Finish-Line Scholarship** to graduating seniors that will return any tuition increases incurred during the four-year period of their studies.

We also recently eased eligibility requirements for five major scholarships. For example, Transfer Academic Scholarships are now guaranteed for students from all Tennessee community colleges.

In addition, even in a time of reduced state funding for higher education, we made a major investment in student success by reallocating money to hire 47 more academic advisors, who will help students maximize their investment and our incentives by providing more support, guidance, and encouragement to help them stay on track to graduate on time.

Another example of how we are aiming for good results is the REBOUND program, which is led by Vincent Windrow, director of Intercultural and Diversity Affairs. REBOUND is targeted to improve retention rates for 564 fall 2014 freshmen who ended the semester with GPAs lower than 2.0. Traditionally, only about 20 percent of such students would return for the next semester. Emails and letters have been sent to invite these students to join the program. We expect that as many as 150 students will participate.

Early indicators are positive for persistence rates in this reform, as well. We'll know more on the first day of class and on census day (Feb. 3).

Need more concrete examples of the University putting its money where its mouth is regarding retention and graduation? You'll find them on the following pages, which are reprinted from the soon-to-be distributed *MTSU Magazine*. They offer an alphabetical look at the many ways MTSU is really all about student success.

*continued on next six pages*

GRADUATE  
**IN FOUR** AND  
GET **MORE**

*News continued on page 13*

# The ABCs

of MTSU's

## Quest for Student Success

by Drew Ruble

### An alphabetical look at MTSU's commitment to student retention and graduation

**G**overnor Bill Haslam's Drive to 55 initiative aims to increase the percentage of Tennesseans with postsecondary credentials from 32 percent to 55 percent to meet the state's present and future workforce and economic needs.

According to the governor's office, more than 20,000 Tennessee high school graduates choose not to continue their education each year, and there are approximately 940,000 adult Tennesseans who have some college credit but haven't earned an associate or four-year degree. The question is: how do colleges and universities in Tennessee do a better job of attracting and retaining college-degree seekers to reach the 55 percent goal?

Every college and university says that student success is its number-one priority, but not every institution lives up to that claim. **We decided to find out if MTSU is doing more than just talk about student success.**

We looked high and low across campus to identify concrete examples of the University putting its money where its mouth is regarding retention and graduation. What we found is perhaps best expressed in this alphabetical look at the many ways MTSU really *is* all about student success!



#### **A** ADVISORS

Even with significant budget cutbacks in higher education across Tennessee, MTSU has reallocated many of its precious dollars to hire **47 new student academic advisors**. Housed in individual colleges and schools, these new hires are working with faculty on a **more proactive, real-time approach** to students who are struggling.



#### **B** BUILDINGS

The \$65 million, nearly 211,000-square-foot **Student Union**, opened in 2013 and dedicated entirely to student activities, speaks to the University's student-centered focus. The recent opening of a \$16 million **Student Services and Admissions Center** and **MT One Stop** help center (both connected to the Student Union by a walking bridge) is another example of MTSU's emphasis on keeping students enrolled and working toward a degree. Everything dealing with financial aid, scholarships, records and scheduling, bills, transcripts, and holds (and more!) is now located in one place. Last but not least, the brand-new state-of-the-art \$147 million **Science Building**, which opened in summer 2014, is offering classes and labs for approximately 80 percent of all students!



MTSU Science Building

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#### **C** COURSE REDESIGN

In recent years, MTSU has launched a mammoth effort to change how it structures and delivers some General Education courses in which too many students were failing. With much effort and painstaking faculty review, these courses have been redesigned in an effort to **increase attendance, engagement, and eventual success**. As President Sidney A. McPhee is quick to emphasize, this is not grade inflation. It's taking a good look in the mirror and doing what's right by our hardworking students.

#### **D** CAREER DEVELOPMENT

While great emphasis has been placed on increasing graduation and retention, MTSU has also given careful consideration to ways it can ensure that students graduate with the skills to get a job and a realistic understanding of the job market. MTSU's University College, in particular, has distinguished itself with programs to help each incoming student **identify an appropriate major and chart a path to a career**.



#### **E** EXPANDED SCHOLARS ACADEMY

Seven years ago, the Scholar's Academy was developed to attract and acclimate qualified low-income, Pell-eligible students to the University and equip them for success. Historically, the program enrolled a small group of students (32 or less) and gave them an opportunity to earn six credit hours, **learn success strategies, get used to college life, and develop a network of peers**. By summer 2014, the number of participants had jumped to a total of 114. These students continue to meet with student-success staff to strengthen their academic and social connections and participate in workshops on topics like note-taking techniques, how to study for exams, and financial literacy.



#### **F** FUNDRAISING

MTSU's most ambitious quest for philanthropy in its history—the ongoing \$80 million Centennial Campaign—has **student success as its focus**. Priorities are increasing financial aid and support for students, maintaining the finest teaching and research faculty possible to educate students, improving physical facilities and academic opportunities for students, and enhancing the Blue Raider athletic program to give student-athletes a world-class educational and athletic experience.



## GRANTS

Many MTSU students are first-generation college students who juggle academic and work demands in pursuit of a degree. For many, a relatively small financial barrier—say, an emergency room visit or unexpected car repair—can delay their studies and their progress toward a degree. Students who find themselves in a financial pinch can now apply for one-time **emergency microgrants** aimed at keeping them in school and on track to earning a degree. These smaller sums can help with verified needs such as tuition, fees, books, housing, and transportation. Grants up to \$250 are available and do not have to be repaid. To be eligible, students must be in good academic standing.



## INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES

Today's students simply must communicate across cultures effectively if they are to participate successfully in the international workplace. At MTSU, internationalization of the student body is a priority. **International student enrollment has increased** from 396 to 789 in five years, and the University placed 335 students in its **study-abroad programs** last summer. International student undergraduate new enrollment increased 20.7 percent in 2014, and new applications increased by 35 percent. For the first time, more than 400 MTSU students studied abroad during a single academic year. MTSU was recognized last year by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* as a top producer of **Fulbright award winners**. The Fulbright Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, is the government's flagship international exchange effort. MTSU was the only Tennessee college or university to earn the *Chronicle's* distinction. Finally, MTSU has **more than 40 exchange agreements** with institutions around the world, including in China, where MTSU's strong academic partnerships in research and industry rival those of any university in America.



## LONG DISTANCE LEARNING

Distance learners comprise more than one-third of MTSU's undergraduate population, and unlike many universities, MTSU does not have a separate faculty serving its online student body. Distance learners have access to the **same core faculty** that traditional students have in on-campus classroom settings.



## ALTERNATIVE DEGREE OPTIONS

Many students change majors during their college careers (sometimes more than once), or they are faced with candidacy issues and are forced to make changes. Often, credit hours earned in one major can't be applied to others, and students can lose time and money. In fall 2013, the **Bachelor of Science in Integrated Studies** (formerly Bachelor of University Studies) was launched with the goal of providing a valuable option to make use of these potentially lost hours.



## HIGH-TECH, HIGH-TOUCH APPROACH

Remember those aforementioned 47 new advisors the University has hired to ensure that struggling students get the help they need? They do their jobs in part through the use of **new, cutting-edge software** the University has adopted that allows them to reach out to students who might be having trouble academically as identified through instructor alerts or the software's predictive analytics function. Other universities have seen great results from similar, more proactive methods of advising. But although technology can boost efficiency, President McPhee is quick to warn that nothing takes the place of **genuine relationships that faculty and advisors create with students**.



## KNOWLEDGEABLE TEACHERS/PROFESSORS

An internationally renowned forensic scientist who is regularly called to crime scenes across Tennessee and consulted by the FBI's top forensic lab. A contamination expert who used native spiders to gauge nature's recovery in the aftermath of the TVA-Kings-ton coal ash spill. A pair of exercise scientists who have successfully used underwater treadmills to treat paralysis victims others had given up on. A nationally recognized economist who regularly appears on business talk shows televised around the world. A music recording instructor who is also a Grammy winner. The only National Teacher of the Year ever to hail from Tennessee. No matter what subject area claims the interest of a prospective college student, **there is an expert at MTSU** who can deliver real knowledge to help get that student where he or she wants to go professionally.



## JUST GRADUATE IN 4 AND GET MORE

MTSU recently unveiled a bold new **financial aid package** to encourage students to graduate in four years. The Graduate in 4 and Get More program promises to **supplement by \$1,000 the Hope Lottery Scholarships** of incoming students who stay on track to graduate in four years and to award a **Finish Line Scholarship** to graduating seniors that will return any tuition increases over that span. Both initiatives are part of the new **Student Success Advantage** (see next page), which is part of the overall **Quest for Student Success** (see next page).



## NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

CUSTOMS is MTSU's new student orientation program. It helps new undergraduates feel comfortable at the University, prepares them for MTSU's educational opportunities, and starts their integration into the intellectual, cultural, and social climate of the institution. CUSTOMS shows new students the ropes. During CUSTOMS, students are shown how MTSU works hard to develop a community devoted to learning, growth, and service. A simple phrase that describes that devotion is "**I am True Blue**." Each time members of the MTSU family repeat those words, they give voice to ideals the University wants to share with students, and they reaffirm the institution's **commitment to a student-centered culture**. Reciting the True Blue Pledge—which commits new students to honesty and integrity, respect for diversity, community engagement, and reason, not violence—has become a tradition at MTSU Convocations.

I AM trueBLUE™



## MIDTERM GRADES

MTSU's **midterm grading initiative** ensures that students know where they stand academically when they most need to know it and can receive appropriate **updates and feedback** from their professors. The full participation of faculty members in this initiative shows how committed they are to the overall success of their students. The University's **academic alert system** also allows faculty to send electronic messages to students and their academic advisors about their progress at any time. Faculty members believe their job is not only to teach students but also to help them succeed and graduate.



## CONNECTION POINT

Studies show that students who are involved in campus life tend to perform better academically and are more likely to graduate than those who don't. Connection Point is a program that **connects students to the University through extracurricular activities** with the goal of improving retention and graduation. In 2013, its first year, more than 2,700 first-time students participated in Connection Point, and more than 2,100 first-time students attended at least one event during fall semester. More than 1,100 first-time students attended four or more events during the semester.

## THE Q UEST FOR STUDENT SUCCESS ITSELF!

A presidentially mandated, provost-driven **blueprint for student success at MTSU** is proof of how seriously the University takes this mission! The plan, unveiled last year, is designed to make sure that every student who attends MTSU with a drive to achieve will be met with the best instruction from excellent professors who care about student success. Instead of focusing on external factors beyond its control, MTSU undertook this quest to focus its energies and talents on **tackling internal factors** over which it has direct influence and which it knows can positively affect learning. Key initiatives include recruiting students who value academic success, enhancing the academic experience by implementing curriculum innovation across all disciplines, emphasizing the role of quality advising, championing enhancements in administrative processes, and **eliminating barriers to student success**. The whole plan is geared toward staff and faculty discovering and developing new and innovative ways to help students be successful.

## RECAPTURE AND R.E.B.O.U.N.D.

Advisors at MTSU now call all previously enrolled students who have not registered for each upcoming semester to encourage them to stay on track and to help them deal with issues like work responsibilities and family issues that might be hindering them. That's recapture. Another initiative called R.E.B.O.U.N.D. helps students recover from a bad semester. Approximately 600 first-time, first-year students will achieve below a 2.0 grade point average in their first fall semester, and of those, only about 20 percent will return the following year. Advisors use the new R.E.B.O.U.N.D. program ("Retake classes. Engage your purpose. Be intentional about attendance. Own your future. Understand what went wrong. Narrow your activities. Determine that you are going to succeed.") to intervene.

## STUDENT SUCCESS ADVANTAGE

As mentioned above (Graduate in 4 and Get More), the **Student Success Advantage plan** provides a \$1,000 **supplement to the Hope scholarship**—making up for a recent state reduction in that program—and also promises to **refund any tuition increases** that occur during a student's college career if he/she graduates in four years. The Student Success Advantage also scales back minimum ACT scores required to qualify for five major scholarships guaranteed to eligible students. And the University's **Transfer Academic Scholarships** are now guaranteed for students from all Tennessee community colleges.

## UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OFFERINGS

MTSU is the only college or university in Tennessee designated an **Adult Learning Focused Institution** by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. Officially, half of MTSU students are classified as adults. MTSU operates the **most successful summer school program in America**. In terms of participation, no other U.S. university comes close. Data strongly suggest that students who attend summer school (including those still in high school or attending another college in fall and spring) graduate at a higher rate. The Middle Tennessee Education Center (MTEC) in Shelbyville is a partnership of MTSU, Motlow State Community College, and Bedford County that offers additional higher education opportunities to those living in south middle Tennessee. That's **higher education in your own backyard**. MTSU has been repeatedly named a **Military Friendly School** by *G.I. Jobs* magazine. No Tennessee university does more to embrace military service members, veterans, and spouses as students and ensure their success.

## TUTORING

Tutoring can be crucial to student success. At every step of the academic journey, students discover that tutoring helps understanding, recollection, and application of what is presented in class. **Tutoring opportunities can be found all over campus**, and an ambitious new tutoring space in Walker Library is available. MTSU students enrolled online can take advantage of tutoring support 24 hours a day!

## VICE PROVOST FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

Dr. Rick Sluder is MTSU's new vice provost for student success. Sluder was previously vice provost for recruitment and outreach at University of Central Missouri, where he helped increase enrollment and led an initiative to improve student retention and graduation. Dr. Sluder has one mission at MTSU: **ensuring academic success!**

## REAL-WORLD OPPORTUNITIES

As an estimated 14,000 fans on Lower Broadway in Nashville enjoyed the music of **Capitol Records** artists including Luke Bryan back in October 2012, 53 MTSU students were modulating audio, operating high-definition cameras, conducting interviews, and recording the concert for the label. A year later, MTSU students did the same for the second annual Capitol Street Festival. Other **real-world experiences** await MTSU students in the research arena. In fall 2014, students in Dr. R. Drew Sieg's Honors biology courses joined the search for natural sources to isolate new medicines and drugs through the **Small World Initiative**, a research experience designed in conjunction with Yale University that addresses the increase in antibiotic-resistant pathogens. Collaborators from more than 60 universities are crowdsourcing the search for new antibiotics and making it a unifying theme for introductory biology lab experiments. In Dr. Sieg's class, students isolate bacteria from local soils, identify them through gene amplification and sequencing, and screen bacteria and their chemical extracts for inhibitory activity against bacterial strains closely related to common pathogens. Students may or may not isolate the next wonder drug, but they will definitely **get first-hand experience** in the pursuit of scientific discovery.

## EXL

The Experiential Learning program gives students **practical experience in real-world environments** related to their fields of study. The idea is to **engage students directly in public service** and offer them experience **beyond textbooks and lectures**. More than 200 courses are now approved as EXL courses University-wide. Students have worked with local organizations such as Room in the Inn, Make a Wish Foundation, and Habitat for Humanity. Participation has demonstrated promise as a way to increase engagement with a corresponding increase in retention. The six-year graduation rate for students taking EXL courses is 86 percent—well above average.

## YEAR-TWO EXPERIENCE

The freshman-year experience gets lots of attention, but research indicates that many second-year students feel a sense of abandonment, which can cause them to leave school. **Increasing student involvement in campus life and academic programs** during the sophomore year is a key issue MTSU is addressing through more academic guidance and extracurricular opportunities.

## ZEROING IN ON UNDECLARED/UNDECIDED STUDENTS

Academic advisors often meet students who begin college without a clear direction. It is also common for them to work with students who begin by charting their own courses but, after facing roadblocks or detours, realize that an alternative route is necessary. Without the right support system in place, **indecision can negatively affect commitment to academic and career goals** and be a strong hindrance to graduation. Recent mandates by the Tennessee Board of Regents require MTSU to modify how it deals with students who are not ready to select a particular major. These students now get **extra advising support**.

## ADMISSIONS EFFORTS

MTSU now offers Saturday campus tours.



We continue to work extremely hard to ensure that we are attracting the best and the brightest new undergraduate students from across the state of Tennessee and the region. When I get a chance to personally meet these prospective students, I am confident in telling them that if they come to MTSU they will get the attention of faculty and staff that they will need to be successful in college.

To that end, regarding our admissions efforts, we have recently added the following:

- Saturday campus tours
- A partnership with iLEAD ACT Prep to integrate MTSU admissions information and general college preparation information
- MTSU nights at various high schools (Shelby, Davidson, Williamson Counties) and in specific recruitment areas
- Application workshops in January

In the near future, we will

- host **admitted student events** (first on Feb. 9 with more dates pending) in specific recruitment areas for students from La Vergne and Cane Ridge High Schools and from the Nashville School of the Arts;
- offer **Transfer Campus Tours** on Feb. 13, March 13, and April 10;
- host a **Community College Transfer Summit** in February; and
- host **Paint the Community Colleges True Blue** events at six campuses statewide (Columbia State, Chattanooga State, Motlow main and Smyrna, Nashville State, and Vol State) in March.

## FISCAL YEAR 2015–2016 BUDGET OVERVIEW

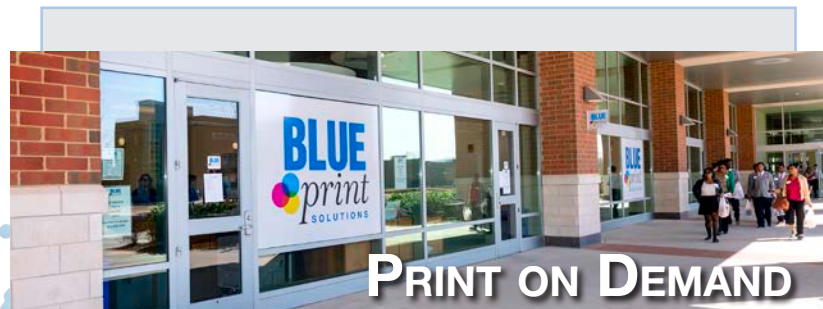


Fiscal Year 2014–15 was the first year of full implementation of the state's outcomes-based funding formula as called for in the Complete College Tennessee Act. Under the act, productivity, rather than enrollment, drives state funding distribution.

MTSU's 2015–2016 outcomes formula adjustment will result in a state funding decrease of \$1,285,900. MTSU had received an increase for the current fiscal year of \$1,252,000. The Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) voted at its November meeting to propose new state funding totaling \$25.7 million for the formula institutions. MTSU's share of the THEC-proposed new funding would be \$2,533,200. Thus, MTSU's state funding could actually increase by \$1,247,300.

THEC also voted to recommend \$9,840,000 in Capital Maintenance funds for MTSU projects for Fiscal Year 2015–2016. The projects include central plant controls updates, generator replacement, automation system control panel replacements for several buildings, domestic water-sewer systems updates, exterior repairs for several buildings, Jones Hall plumbing updates, and campus-wide sidewalk repairs. No MTSU Capital Project (building construction) was proposed for new funding.

THEC's recommendations have been submitted to the Department of Finance and Administration for consideration in the proposed state budget that Gov. Bill Haslam will be submitting to the legislature in the coming weeks. At that point, we will have more information regarding our likely 2015–16 state appropriations.



Much like its commercial counterparts, BLUE print Solutions, the University's one-year-old retail printing center on the first floor of the Student Union, provides creative solutions for a variety of graphic arts projects from publication binding to large-format posters to passport photos and the like.

BLUE print Solutions is focused on meeting the needs of students first, but it also serves faculty, staff, the administration, alumni, and the general public. It operates seven days a week with day and night shifts.

I encourage you to give this state-of-the-art facility a try on your next print project. I can assure you that BLUE print Solutions stands ready to serve.

## A LOOK BACK AT A TRULY "GRAND" OPENING



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The ribbon was cut in mid-October, making it official that our new Science Building is ready to take MTSU's science and research efforts to a higher level! As the University moves forward in its second century of service, it's important to remember this milestone.

Hundreds turned out for the Oct. 15 ceremony, and they were joined by Gov. Bill Haslam; Chancellor John Morgan of the TBR; a host of state lawmakers, local officials, alumni, donors, supporters, faculty, staff, and—most importantly—students whose scholarly and career pursuits will be greatly enhanced by this state-of-the-art facility.

We all know that the Science Building was desperately needed. I remind you that roughly 80 percent of all MTSU students will take classes in the building during their academic journeys.

Longtime faculty member Tammy Melton put it well in her remarks at the grand opening as she thanked past and present faculty members who pressed for the new building.

"The building is a magnet," she said. "In the recruitment of new students and new faculty, we no longer need to apologize for existing poor facilities and offer promises of future construction. In 2014, the 21st century has come to MTSU chemistry and biology. The future is here. Now."

Now, indeed. I share Professor Melton's belief that our science faculty now will be able to pursue cutting-edge

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# A TRULY "GRAND" OPENING

continued from page 11

research because they finally have the necessary equipment and space. Research of the kind promised by the partnership between our Tennessee Center for Botanical Medicine Research and China's Guangxi Botanical Garden of Medicinal Plants (to study the health benefits of ginseng) will thrive in this new facility.

Perhaps more importantly, our students will have the opportunity to become fully equipped to compete with all other students in the country for jobs in the sciences, for placement in professional schools, and for entry into graduate programs in the United States and abroad.

Gov. Haslam has challenged us to maximize this facility to produce more Tennessee graduates prepared to excel in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. And our Science Building is already doing that—producing graduates to fill high-technology jobs, prepare more teachers for math and science in K–12 schools, and boost the economy of our state and region.

MTSU's enrollment has almost quadrupled in the last 45 years but with no increased space for science education until now. Wisner-Patten Science Hall and Davis Science Building were built in 1932 and 1967, respectively, and have a combined total of nearly 117,000 gross square feet. With more than 250,000 gross square feet of space, the new building was designed and built for innovative teaching, faculty and student laboratory research, and collaborative learning.

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

Certain upgrades will be particularly transformative to research. In chemistry, for instance, modern fume hoods now allow experiments that were long prohibited in our older buildings. The new building strengthens MTSU's ability to pursue a solid, focused research agenda, and it significantly raises the University's profile as a research institution.

Rest assured, MTSU's new Science Building will be the portal through which we enter a new realm of science and research and compete for its rewards!



## STUDENT LIFE



Students need to connect academically in the classroom and socially around campus to feel like they belong at MTSU. That's why all of our students, especially freshmen, are being asked to attend a variety of events and activities during the first six weeks of the semester through the **Connection Point** program ([www.mtsu.edu/connection](http://www.mtsu.edu/connection)).

More than 2,000 freshmen participated in Connection Point in fall 2014. Participation incentives were added this year, including prizes such as iPad minis, campus food vouchers, a tailgate package, and gifts from the bookstore. Due to Connection Point's success, the program will now be offered during the spring semester! Visit the website above for a list of events.

Here are just a few more examples of Student Life activities to come:

Throughout the spring semester, Student Affairs will offer a range of involvement opportunities. Go to [www.mtsu.edu/calendar/index.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/calendar/index.php) for more information.

Another **Habitat for Humanity** build will take place during March. This year, university students across the country will join MTSU students in Murfreesboro to participate in the build. For more information, go to [www.mtsu.edu/sos/habitat.php](http://www.mtsu.edu/sos/habitat.php).

March is **National Women's History Month** and MTSU's observance will feature **Lisa Ling**, a former cohost of *The View* and a former contributing reporter for the *Oprah Winfrey Show*. She now has a series on CNN. Ling will speak **March 25 at 3:30 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom.**

News continued from page 3

## So Much Cooler Online

ComputerScienceOnline.org listed an MTSU University College online degree program among its Best Online Computer Science Degrees for 2015. The website, a resource for online learning in computer science, looked at tuition costs, student-teacher ratios, graduation rates, accreditation, and more to compile its rankings. MTSU offers a bachelor's in Professional Studies with a concentration in Information Technology that can be earned fully online. The degree is part of the University College online degree program, designed for distance and nontraditional students.



## Sharpening Our Skills

A recent collaboration between Jennings A. Jones College of Business and an internationally recognized professional development training organization holds potential to profoundly improve the teaching of soft skills. Soft skills include the ability to communicate clearly, to work well in a team environment, to solve problems, and even to show up for work or meetings on time. They are professional and personal traits that characterize good working relationships with others. Business owners say soft skills are as essential as technical abilities in performing a job and are absolutely necessary to make business relationships productive for all involved. Led by Dean David Urban, an exclusive partnership has been forged with Dale Carnegie Training to embed soft-skills training into the college's curriculum. Carnegie, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, famously developed courses in self-improvement, salesmanship, corporate training, public speaking, and interpersonal skills that are taught nationwide by institutes bearing his name. Because of the new alliance, Jones College students will have taken at least one such course for credit before obtaining their degrees. **MTSU's partnership with Carnegie Training of Tennessee will not be duplicated at any other university** in the state, and will be unique across the country.



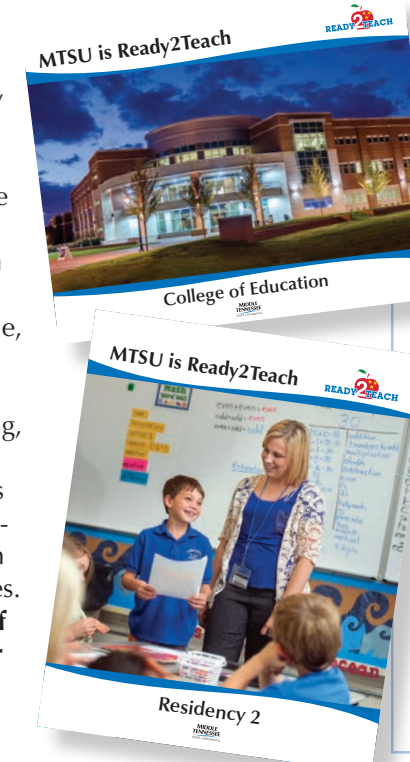
President Sidney A. McPhee, Blackman Principal Leisa Justus, and Don Odom, Director of Rutherford County Schools

## Good Partners

MTSU will become a partner in Blackman High School's new Collegiate Academy, offering college-level courses on the Blackman campus this fall and assisting in the development of its academic enrichment programs. The agreement will allow eligible Blackman juniors and seniors to take up to six hours of University courses at no cost. Credits will count on both high school and college transcripts. The partners will develop and offer select postsecondary courses at Blackman with an eye toward building curriculum options for the Collegiate Academy, a competitive college-prep program that starts this fall. MTSU will also make available to Blackman students access to the new Science Building, the opportunity for study-abroad programs, and participation in campus events and lectures.

## Those Who Can, Teach

The College of Education successfully completed its reaccreditation process for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE). All standards were met for both initial licensure and advanced (graduate) programs for NCATE, and all licensure programs were validated by TDOE. A site visit to MTSU in November by an NCATE/TDOE team was the culmination of a process that began with an off-site review of evidence submitted to the agencies by a national team of experts and a response by the college to the off-site findings. The site visit also focused on all aspects of the Ready 2Teach program, finding that it met the components of the NCATE/CAEP Transformation Initiative.

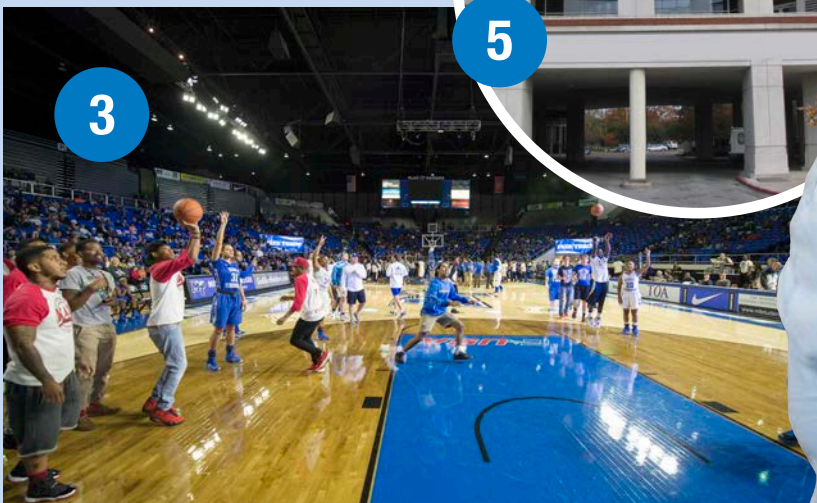


News continued on page 15

## CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Many renovations of campus buildings are underway or were recently completed. Here is a brief update on recent and current projects.

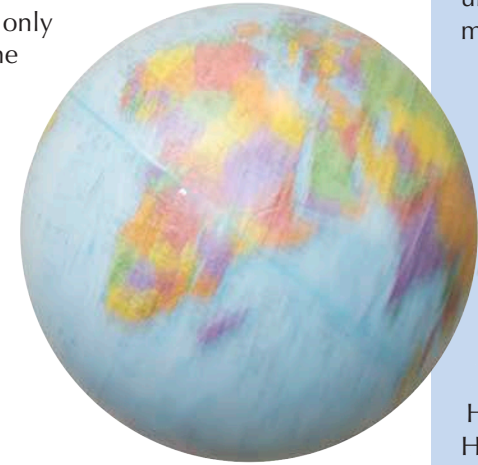
- 1 Cope Administration Building.** The \$3-million renovation project inside Cope is now substantially complete. The renovation addresses the need for adequate administrative space following the move of Admissions, Records, Financial Aid, and the Bursar's Office into the new Student Services and Admissions Center. The scope of the renovation included the relocation of the President's Office from the first floor to the second floor and the Provost's Office moving into the vacated space. The Business Office was relocated to both sides of the first floor, and improvements were made to restrooms, lighting, signage, and the building's infrastructure. The relocation of Financial Aid will allow the Information Technology Division offices to expand on the second floor of Cope.
- 2 Davis Science and Wisner-Patten Science.** The project-design documents are complete, and construction is expected to begin this month. Completion is planned by fall 2016. A connector between the two buildings will create a new central entrance for both and will provide ADA accessibility within both buildings. Programs benefiting most from this renovation include Geosciences, Physics, Anthropology, and Forensic Science. The project is a continuation of the science building capital project for improvements to the science facilities.
- 3 Murphy Center** has had extensive renovations to its restrooms, lighting, and acoustics, and it has a new roof and HVAC replacement equipment. The \$12.64 million project is substantially complete.
- 4 McFarland Building Renovation.** The building has been renovated to accommodate the relocation of the Photography Department from the existing Photography Building. The project is substantially complete and occupancy is planned for early spring 2015. The existing Photography Building is planned for demolition in spring 2015, allowing an open green space between Davis Science and Bragg Mass Communication.
- 5 Bell Street Center Renovation.** A notice to proceed with construction on this project is expected within the next month, and completion is planned by early 2016. Occupants will include graduate business studies for Jennings A. Jones College of Business, University College, the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services, and the brand-new Center for Chinese Music and Culture. In addition, there will be lighting improvements in the garage and new lighting in the surface parking lots as well as new fencing around the green space.
- 6 Flight Simulator Building.** This project is designed to house new and existing flight simulators for the Aerospace Department. Construction is anticipated in early spring and is planned for completion by early 2016. The facility will be located at Murfreesboro Airport.



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## Global Reach

Senior Honors student **Tandra Martin** was one of a select group of approximately 325 students nationwide to be interviewed for the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship, which provides two years of study at Oxford University. Although she was not selected as one of 32 recipients, she said the interview experience was invaluable. Martin is currently a finalist for a Fulbright Scholarship to study in South Africa. A Buchanan Fellow (the University's top scholarship program), she has a perfect GPA as an International Relations major minoring in Spanish and Organizational Communication. She received the University Community Service Award (2014) and the Harold Love Outstanding Community Involvement Award from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission—one of only five students and five faculty or staff members in the Tennessee higher education system selected for the \$1,000 award, which recognizes significant public service. (The award is named for Harold Love Sr., who served on the first Nashville Metro Council in the early 1960s and later in the Tennessee House.) Martin hopes to one day serve as a U.S. foreign officer. Her father, **Terry Martin**, works for MTSU in Printing Services.



## High Notes

MTSU's Department of Recording Industry—the largest in the country—has been blowing people away for 40 years. In September 2014, Billboard reinforced the department's well-established reputation when it named MTSU one of the nation's five top universities for learning about the music industry.

More recently, the *Hollywood Reporter* listed MTSU's music business program among its "Top 25 Music Schools" for 2014, ahead of a similar program at nearby Belmont University.

And late last year, former students, including country music stars Chris Young, Hillary Scott, Eric Paslay, Sam Hunt, and Brett Eldridge, all found themselves on the Billboard Country Airplay chart simultaneously.

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## MTSU IS TOBACCO FREE!

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

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

We have come a long way in a short time with our effort to stamp out smoking on 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, when we have many new students on campus, I think a gentle reminder of the policy is necessary.



# ATHLETICS

Blue Raider sports teams had another exciting and productive year in 2014. Since our University accepted an invitation to join Conference USA in November 2012, Blue Raider squads have consistently attended postseason play, won championships, and achieved C-USA All-Academic team status. Here are just some of the many recent athletic and academic highlights achieved by MTSU student-athletes.

Along with a bowl-eligible football team for the fifth time in the last six years, MTSU had a women's cross country team that won its first-ever conference championship; tournaments hosted by both men's and women's golf; and a soccer team that produced its 11th winning season in the last 12 years.

During the fall 2014 semester, 11 of 15 teams had semester team GPAs of 3.0 or higher, 104 student-athletes made the Dean's List (3.5+), and 32 had perfect 4.0 GPAs. Overall, 191 of 343 student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher (56 percent).

Five student-athletes made the Conference USA All-Academic Team during the fall season (below). They were **Jordan Parker** (football), **Kelsey Branstetter** (soccer), **Kelsey Brouwer** (soccer), **Tori Hawkins** (soccer), and **Shadrack Matelong** (cross country).



Jordan Parker



Kelsey Branstetter



Kelsey Brouwer



Tori Hawkins



Shadrack Matelong

Team), running back Reggie Whatley (Honorable Mention), running back Shane Tucker (Honorable Mention), defensive end Shubert Bastien (Honorable Mention), defensive tackle Pat McNeil (Honorable Mention), and linebacker DJ Sanders (All-Freshman Team).



Coach Rick Stockstill

Leighton Gasque

In nine years under **Coach Rick Stockstill**, Middle Tennessee football has achieved bowl-eligibility six times (including five in the last six years).

The Blue Raider football team finished second in the C-USA East Division for the second straight season with a 5–3 record. All three losses were on the road, and two were to eventual bowl teams.

Conference USA's 2014 **All-Conference football teams**, as selected by the 13 head coaches, included nine MT players: safety Kevin Byard (1st Team), offensive lineman Darius Johnson (2nd Team), offensive lineman Isaiah Anderson (2nd Team), linebacker T. T. Barber (2nd

Linebacker **Leighton Gasque** finished his Blue Raider career with 22.0 quarterback sacks to rank second all-time at Middle Tennessee.

Safety **Kevin Byard** led C-USA with six interceptions, giving him 15 for his career so far. That ranks second all-time at Middle Tennessee and is first among all active NCAA players. In the 2015 campaign, Byard will be chasing



Kevin Byard

the Blue Raider career record of 17 set by **James Griffin** (1979–82).

Middle Tennessee became just the 31st NCAA Division I **women's basketball program** to reach 800 all-time victories with its 76–68 win at UAB on January 4.

On November 23, Middle Tennessee was at Ole Miss for a historic women's basketball game: for the first time in Division I women's basketball history, a father and son coached against one another.

**Coach Rick Insell** faced



Coach Rick Insell faced off against Coach Matt Insell

off against his son, **Coach Matt Insell** of the Rebels. (MT won by six.)

Middle Tennessee's senior forward **Jacquez Rozier** (from Waynesboro, Georgia) has been nominated for the 2015 Allstate Good Works Team, announced by the National Association of Basketball Coaches. Rozier, the lone four-year senior on the Blue Raider squad, has logged nearly 50 hours of community service since his arrival on campus. This prestigious community service award recognizes distinguished student-athletes who have demonstrated commitment to enriching the lives of others and contributing to the greater good of their communities.

Volleyball's **Chelsea Ross** enjoyed a strong fall campaign, earning First-Team All-Conference honors after finishing the year second in kills with 280. The junior also won the C-USA Spirit of Service Award, which recognizes significant community service, academic standing, and participation in their sports.



Jacquez Rozier



Chelsea Ross

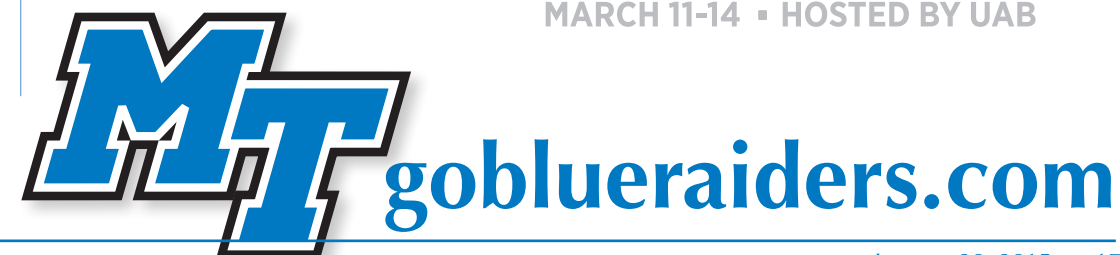
Middle Tennessee senior soccer player **Kelsey Branstetter** (pictured on page 18) garnered CoSIDA Capital One Academic All-District honors. Branstetter holds a perfect 4.0 GPA as a double major in Athletic Training and Exercise Science.

On November 1, the **women's cross country team** won its first-ever conference title by capturing the Conference USA Championship at Eagle Point Cross country Course in Denton, Texas. **Coach Dean Hayes** earned his 49th career conference title in his 50th year, and Assistant **Coach Keith Vroman** was named C-USA Coach of the Year.

**Hannah Maina** represented Middle Tennessee at the NCAA Cross Country Championships in Terre Haute, Indiana, in November. Maina became just the second woman in Middle Tennessee history to reach the NCAA Championships.



MARCH 11-14 • HOSTED BY UAB



## TRUE BLUE RESPECT

True Blue Respect is a student-focused campaign that reinforces MTSU community standards. Two of those standards are the proper use of golf carts on campus and an ongoing push to keep MTSU clean and beautiful.



### Golf Cart Etiquette

When spring classes start, pedestrian and motorized traffic increases throughout campus, and golf carts seem to be everywhere. Please remember the Environmental Health and Safety Committee's guidelines for proper and safe golf cart use. Golf carts travel in areas frequented by thousands of pedestrians daily, and the carts and people also share space with an increasing number of bicyclists. The purpose of the golf cart safety guidelines is to improve driver and passenger safety, prevent theft, and help preserve the landscape.

Anyone who is responsible for or who drives an MTSU golf cart can check [www.mtsu.edu/ehs/](http://www.mtsu.edu/ehs/) for instructions on complying with the guidelines. A map of preferred golf cart routes is also on the site.

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.



### Clean Campus Crew

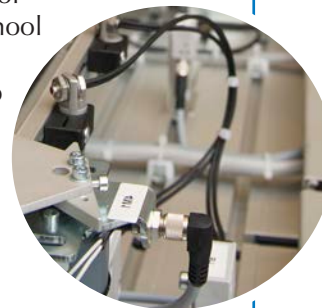
Helping keep MTSU beautiful is a point of pride for the Clean Campus Crew. These dedicated students are chosen to participate in a program that gives them a work-study opportunity that includes the waiver of some tuition and fees. The crew works with Facilities Services, which maintains the grounds of the entire University. One way the crew has helped significantly is in the removal of unauthorized signage that creates visual clutter and, eventually, litter. That willingness to spend time to help beautify our campus shows school pride—sometimes called “Respecting the Blue.”

### The Modern Library

Walker Library has launched MTSU's first digital institutional repository, JEWLScholar (<http://jewlscholar.mtsu.edu/>). It's a site for University organizational materials and reports (e.g., accreditation), faculty scholarship, all MTSU dissertations in electronic form, and award-winning undergraduate research. In a very short time, faculty and student research is already being seen and used more frequently.

### Research for Answers

Recent grant awards include two from the National Science Foundation (NSF). First is a two-year, \$195,000 **NSF ADVANCE grant** to further the advancement of women in STEM education—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—and, potentially, all women students and staff at MTSU. The study, “A Catalyst to ADVANCE the Participation and Advancement of Women in Academics: STEM Careers at Middle Tennessee State University,” is led by **Provost Brad Bartel** and will focus on identifying barriers that affect recruitment, retention, participation, and promotion of women STEM faculty. Second is a three-year \$438,000 **NSF DRK12** grant titled “Promoting Active Learning Strategies in Biology (PALS)” and is led by **Dr. Tom Cheatham**. The project will conduct design and development research to continuously improve instructional materials through a collaboration of high school teachers and college faculty members who are experienced in using the instructional approaches being compared.



## PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION

With the end of the final phase of the Parking and Transportation Improvements Project in 2014, MTSU now has more than 700 new student parking spaces and an upgraded roadway infrastructure. We can now truly handle the vehicle circulation of our students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

Our transportation system, with its designated shuttle bus lanes and traffic-calming roundabouts, is a model being studied and copied by other universities seeking workable solutions to their growing transportation challenges.

I'm pleased to say that (with a few less-intrusive exceptions) we have successfully completed our planned improvements, and we expect no significant changes in on-campus parking or traffic circulation for the spring 2015 semester. One note, however: the City of Murfreesboro's improvements to Middle Tennessee Boulevard could begin in March or April. Although this alert has been given to us many times before, we are now being told that this work is definitely ready to begin this year. When it does, it will certainly



affect our traffic flow, and access on the west side of campus will be compromised. When we receive final notice that the work will proceed, we will communicate daily with city representatives, and we are ready to issue weekly traffic updates to the University community regarding road closures and recommended access routes.

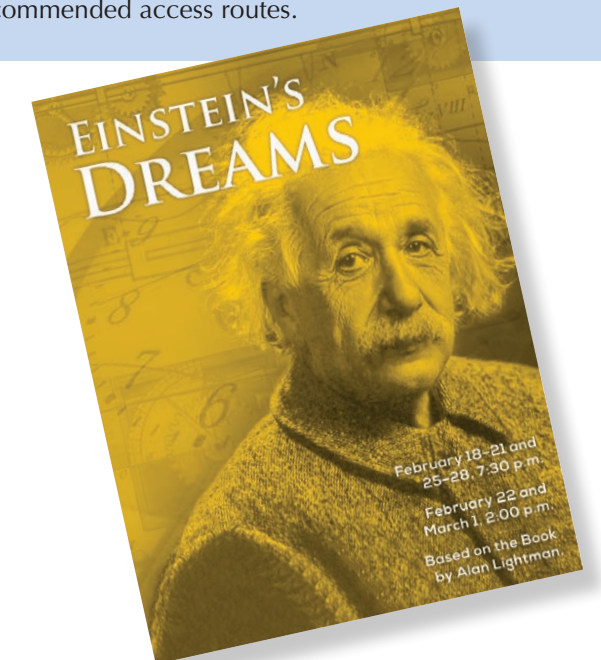
## MTSU ARTS

MTSU Arts, a program of the College of Liberal Arts, will host a patron's reception February 19 at 6:00 p.m. in Saunders Fine Arts Building, Room 101. Immediately following the reception, the entire University community is invited to attend opening night performances of either *The Merry Widow* or *Einstein's Dreams*.

Led by Dr. Raphael Bundage, students in the School of Music's Opera Workshop and Voice Performance programs will perform scenes from Lehar's *The Merry Widow* at 7:30 p.m. in Hinton Hall, Wright Music Building. At the same time, in Tucker Theatre, Dr. Crosby Hunt of the Department of Theatre and Dance will direct a talented student cast in *Einstein's Dreams*, a musical adapted from the bestselling book by Alan Lightman.

MTSU Arts will continue to provide Broadway-style entertainment with a production of the award-winning *La Cage aux Folles*, directed by Professor Deborah Anderson. Showtimes will be Thursday, April 23, through Sunday, April 26, in Tucker Theatre. For a full list of 2015 MTSU Arts shows, exhibits, and performances, see the calendar at [www.mtsuarts.com](http://www.mtsuarts.com).

I encourage each of you to join the MTSU Arts Patrons Society, which offers various 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 at left.



**MTSU Arts**  
ART • DANCE • MUSIC • THEATRE

For more information, contact **Connie Huddleston** at 615-494-7628 or [Connie.Huddleston@mtsu.edu](mailto:Connie.Huddleston@mtsu.edu)

To become a 2014–2015 Patrons Society member, please visit [www.mtsu.edu/supportmtsuarts](http://www.mtsu.edu/supportmtsuarts).

## FUNDRAISING



Dr. Liz Rhea

Our ongoing Centennial Campaign, the largest fundraising effort in MTSU's history, is having a transformative effect on programs and students across campus.

Our new, \$147-million Science Building rests on a foundation of giving. An example is the generous bequest from **Dr. Liz Rhea** and her late husband, **Creighton**, for the new Science Building.

Dr. Rhea understands how long we needed a new science building and the impact it can have on our student body and our ability to compete as a university for research dollars.

Rhea, an alumna ('55) and Murfreesboro resident, is a longtime giver to the University. The open atrium area in the new building now bears the Rhea name.



Pat Branam



Ronda Vaughter

In other important fundraising news, MTSU has hired **Patricia "Pat" Branam** to strengthen its successful fundraising efforts as its new director of development.

Branam, who assumed her new role Jan. 5, previously served as associate vice chancellor and interim vice chancellor at the University of Tennessee–Chattanooga and as a constituent development officer and assistant dean at the University of Cincinnati.

At UTC, Branam helped the university exceed its fundraising campaign in recent years, managed the university's foundation of more than \$100 million in assets, and instituted campus-based annual giving programs.

At MTSU, Branam will play a key role in support of the Centennial Campaign and new development initiatives. She will also manage the staff in the Development and Foundation Office.

Last but certainly not least, **Ronda Vaughter**, former assistant director of MTSU Telecommunications, has been named the University's new director of Advancement Services, which provides essential support to MTSU's fundraising and alumni programs.

Contact the Development Office at

(615) 898-2502

MTSU Box 109

1301 East Main Street

Murfreesboro, TN 37132

E-mail: [devofc@mtsu.edu](mailto:devofc@mtsu.edu)

Visit us online at

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