



**CLA**  
College of Liberal Arts  
EXPLORE/ENGAGE/ENRICH/EARN

**STRATEGIC PLAN  
2019-2024:  
PAGE 4**

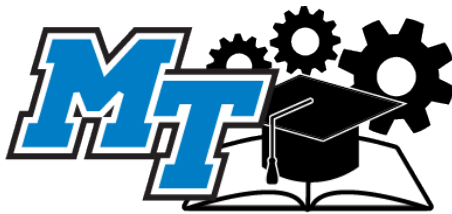
**alumni**  
Middle Tennessee State University

**CLA ALUMNI LEAD IN  
DISTINGUISHED  
AWARDS: PAGES 5-6**

**CLA  
FIRST  
GEN**  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

**"CLA FIRST GEN"  
CAMPAIGN:  
PAGE 7**

# FALL 2019 CLA NEWS



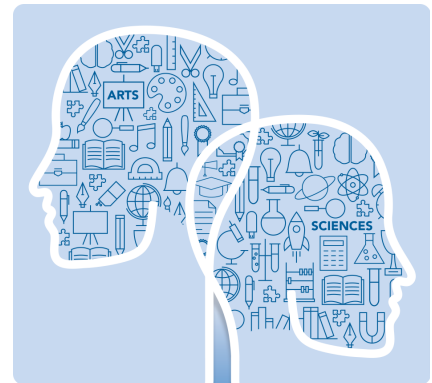
## General Education Redesign

## National Trends in General Education Redesign

Join us for the Fall Faculty Enrichment Series. Susan Myers-Shirk and Katie Brackett will share more about trends in general education redesign nationwide and engage in Q&A about the ongoing process at MTSU. Feel free to bring your lunch to the session on Friday, September 27, from 11:30 AM-1:00 PM in the Faculty Senate Chambers (JUB 100).

## Arts and Sciences Majors Week 2019

CLA is again partnering with the College of Basic and Applied Sciences to present the Arts and Sciences Majors Showcase Week! There are two new events this year – a Career Panel for students and a Faculty professional development session. The Career Panel will feature local human resources managers who will offer advice to students about navigating the job market and leveraging their in-demand skills as liberal arts and science majors. Please encourage your students to attend the events and explore the options available to create a rich academic experience that will prepare them for life after graduation.



**New to the Showcase this year, a Faculty Panel:**

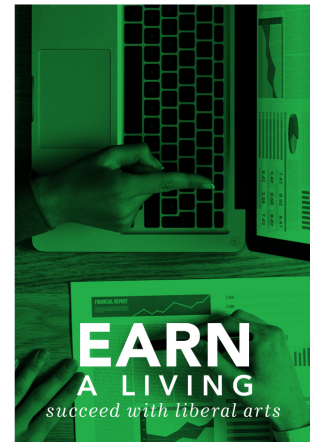
**Incorporating Transferrable Skills in Liberal Arts and Basic and Applied Sciences Courses.**

Faculty from both Colleges will share ways they identify and incorporate the skills most valued by employers into their coursework, discuss how they address students' concerns about the worth of courses that build these skills in indirect ways, and share class activities that demonstrate how faculty in CLA and CBAS are adding to the students' portfolios of experiences and preparing them for careers. **This session is presented by faculty for faculty.**

## CLA Virtual Resources

Have you visited the CLA website lately? Here are a few of the many resources available for faculty and staff online:

- **Why Liberal Arts?:** In the Liberal Arts, we are often asked by students, parents, and community members about the value of studying our disciplines. Articles from outside academia provide external validation of our work. This webpage houses a collection of articles supporting the value of a liberal arts education.
- **Student Information:** Students can find links to CLA advising, internships, emergency micro grants, study abroad scholarships, and events.
- **Faculty Information:** Go here for links to grant and award opportunities, committee information, a nomination form for the **Friends of Liberal Arts Board**, instructional guidelines, and a form to share your accomplishments with the Dean's office.
- **Social Media:** Follow CLA on **Instagram**, **Facebook**, and **LinkedIn** and help promote our programs and events!



## MTSU Arts Patron Society

The MTSU Arts Patron Society enhances the opportunities for our students in the performing and fine arts programs. When you become a member of the Patron Society, you will help keep the performing and fine arts at MTSU vibrant and support the University's role as a cultural catalyst in Middle Tennessee. Membership offers opportunities to enjoy special events, exhibits, and performances. Faculty and staff can easily join the Patron Society online at [mtsuarts.com](http://mtsuarts.com). If you are already a Patron, an invitation to October's Patron Society Reception will arrive soon.

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

## CLA Faculty in the News

Throughout the year, MTSU's Office of News and Media Relations features faculty who provide expertise to local, state, and national media outlets. To better promote these important contributions, please contact **Matthew Hibdon** and **Gina Logue** to share when you are part of interviews and articles. Here are a few of the CLA mentions in Logue's most recent **article** on September 11, 2019:



"**Kent Syler**, a professor of political science and international relations, analyzed the Metro Nashville mayor's race between incumbent David Briley and Metro Councilman John Cooper for an Aug. 15 article in The Tennessean. His comments are available [here](#). Syler also commented on the impact of the lack of interesting political races on voter turnout for an article in the Sept. 2 Chattanooga Times Free Press. His views are available [here](#)."



"Dr. **Louis Haas**, a professor of history, wrote in an editorial for USA Today that gun control measures would not help curb mass killings in public places. His comments are available [here](#)."



"Dr. **Louis Kyriakouides**, director of the Albert Gore Research Center, compared litigation against pharmaceutical companies because of the opioid crisis to the litigation against tobacco companies in the 1990s in an Aug. 28 article at [www.sputniknews.com](http://www.sputniknews.com). His perspectives are available [here](#). Kyriakouides also participated in a podcast on the vaping epidemic Sept. 9 at [www.sputniknews.com](http://www.sputniknews.com). The audio can be heard [here](#)."

## Faculty Activity Beyond the Headlines

Faculty research and involvement are often covered by the University and/or external news outlets. However, there are many worthwhile, yet unreported, deeds that happen across campus every day and make CLA the best college at MTSU.

- **Debbie Sickler-Voight** (Art & Design) recently learned that two current students chose to enroll at MTSU because of the recruiting event she held in Columbia, Tennessee, for the students of an MTSU Art Alumna, Rebecca Witherow ('08). These students attended last year's Project Portfolio Open House and some enrolled at MTSU this fall as majors in Art Studio and Graphic Design. Partnerships like these are vital to continue increasing the size of our incoming classes. If any faculty intend to visit local community colleges, feel free to reach out to Transfer Coordinator **Jeana Nier** in Admissions to coordinate efforts and maximize the institution's impact.
- **Chris Combest** (School of Music) models the behavior that he expects from his tuba students. If you stop by Saunders Fine Arts at 7:00 AM, he can be found with his students working through morning warmups and getting their days off to a better start with a nutritious breakfast snack.
- **Tiffany Saul** (Sociology & Anthropology) recently empowered a student to engage in self-advocacy during a life-shaking series of events. By connecting the student with the CLA Advisors, emergency micro grant funds were utilized to provide stability and keep the student enrolled.

# CLA Strategic Planning Update

The College of Liberal Arts spent 2018-19 working on a new strategic plan which will be in effect from 2019-20 through 2023-24. The SOAR model (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) was selected as a means of using appreciative inquiry to build upon the college's successes from the previous plan's implementation. At the end of that summer, a basic timeline was presented to the CLA Chairs. In Fall 2018, an organizing committee was created to review and revise the proposed framework and schedule. Seven SOAR sessions were conducted with a total of 76 participants. Sessions involved working through sets of open-ended questions in small groups made up of CLA faculty, staff, students, and alumni. During the sessions, a facilitator took notes related to ideas discussed as each part of the session included time for broader discussions across groups. Workbooks containing notes from the small group discussions were collected at the end of each session.

After the SOAR sessions, Dawn McCormack created a database of workbook items and session notes. Using this information, McCormack worked with the organizing committee to group the items into categories and created a survey to assess the relative importance of these categories and items for faculty. In the February 2019 survey, faculty (94 participants) rated the importance of each item on a scale from 1-10. In general, these rankings were in line with the SOAR sessions, though a few items were removed as their scores were well below the others.

Using the survey data, McCormack drafted goals and composed a review committee, which read these drafts and supplied comments to help revise the document. After the revisions, she composed a survey for faculty review of the plan's components. 170 people reviewed the plan with 62 completing the entire survey. Taking these comments into consideration, the final version was produced. The plan was then presented to the faculty at the 2019 CLA Fall Faculty and Staff Meeting.

## CLA Strategic Plan 2019-2024 Goals

Goal 1: Increase support to enable faculty and students to accomplish their goals

Goal 2: Enhance outreach and communication efforts

Goal 3: Increase diversity and support of underrepresented faculty and students

Goal 4: Strengthen the sense of community

The purpose of this process was to establish a faculty-driven, guiding document for the CLA Dean's office to follow in setting priorities for projects and to help us ensure that our office continues its mission by effectively serving CLA faculty, staff, and students. The goals blend a continuation of efforts started under the previous strategic plan, our current efforts under the guidance of participants' feedback, and completely new ideas to move the College forward. This plan will require collaboration with faculty and staff to implement these initiatives, and an online volunteer form will be available soon. The full plan is on the [CLA website](#).

## Winning Alumni

Each year, the MTSU Alumni Association honors top alumni from around the world with Distinguished Alumni Awards. This year, three of the five recipients are CLA Alumni!



**Dr. Carroll Van West ('77)**  
True Blue Citation of  
Distinction- Achievement in  
Education (MTSU Faculty)

**Dr. Carroll Van West ('77)** is the Director of the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation and a Professor in the Department of History. Additionally, Dr. West serves as Tennessee State Historian (appointed by Governor Haslam in 2013), is the co-chair of the Tennessee Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission, and is director of The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area. West serves on the board of advisors for the National Trust for Historic Preservation and continues to work extensively with the National Register of Historic Places program. He has worked with museum and preservation projects in many other states, including Alabama, Mississippi, and Montana most recently. He has written numerous articles and book reviews about southern and western history and regularly speaks to history, museum, preservation, and civic groups and conferences in Tennessee and across the nation. Dr. West's research interests lie in 19th and 20th century southern and western history as well as architecture and material culture. He teaches courses in

architectural history, historic preservation, and state and local history. West has directed to completion over 100 M.A. theses and 30 Ph.D. dissertations of MTSU graduate students in history, historic preservation, and public history.

**Dr. Aaron Shew ('11)** is the inaugural holder of the Wilson Chair of Agricultural Economics at Arkansas State University. While at MTSU, he was a dual-degree student with a B.S. in International Relations and a B.A. in Global Studies. After earning his undergraduate degrees, Shew accepted a position with SALT International where he provided on the ground training for farmers in Afghanistan. From there, he went to Iraq where he directed the construction of a grain mill and facilitated agricultural training with the Kurdish population. Since that time, he has studied, worked, and conducted research in a number of different countries, including India, Rwanda, Uganda, Bangladesh, and Mozambique. He is an expert at using agricultural economics and geography to investigate and find solutions for challenging issues in agriculture and the environment. His extensive background in agriculture economics, agriculture systems, and farm management are continuing to create positive changes in people's daily lives all over the world.



**Dr. Aaron Shew ('11)**  
Young Alumni  
Achievement Award

## Winning Alumni (con't)



**Jeremy Cowart** ('99)  
Distinguished Alumnus  
Award

**Jeremy Cowart** ('99) is an award-winning photographer, artist, and entrepreneur whose mission in life is to "explore the intersection of creativity and empathy." He is a proud alumnus of the Graphic Design program in the Department of Art & Design. Jeremy has published four books and is a sought-after speaker, having presented at TEDx, the United Nations, and creative conferences across the country. Jeremy's list of photography clients is both extensive and impressive featuring Pope Francis, Barack Obama, Taylor Swift, Garth Brooks, Tim Tebow, Carrie Underwood, Lauren Daigle, the cast of *Nashville*, and many more! The list goes on and on with magazine and album covers. Jeremy's latest new book, *I'm Possible: Jumping Into Fear and Discovering a Life of Purpose*, is based on Jeremy's viral life story video that was released in 2015 and launched Jeremy's speaking career where he has delivered this message to tens of thousands across America. The book dives much deeper into all of the

stories and projects Jeremy has done and ultimately encourages people of all ages to jump into fear in order to find their own purpose in life. His latest endeavor is The Purpose Hotel, a planned global for-profit hotel chain designed to fuel the work of not-for-profit organizations through clever connections and creative ideas. The first hotel is scheduled to open in downtown Nashville in 2022. Cowart is the founder of a global photography movement, Help-Portrait, a mobile social networking app called OKDOTHIS, and an online teaching platform, See University.

## Student Success Update, Fall 2019<sup>1</sup>

- **86.7%** of CLA full-time undergraduate students were retained from Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 (up 0.9% from 2017-2018)
- **2,117** Fall enrollment in CLA
- **79,131** SCH in Fall 2019 (up 1,732 from Fall 2018)
- **73%** of all Fulbright winners at MTSU are CLA students
- **45%** of all recipients of national and international fellowships at MTSU are CLA students
- Last year, CLA had 1 **Fulbright** winner, 2 **JET** recipients, and 1 **NSF REU** recipient.

### Did You Know?

You do not have to wait until midterms to submit Academic Progress Reports on Pipeline. They can be submitted throughout the semester and are visible to both students and their advisors. Faculty can also reach out to advisors directly to provide updates. Early alerts enable earlier intervention.

<sup>1</sup> Enrollment and SCH data are preliminary (not based on official census data).



## First Generation Connections

Even with improved retention rates throughout the College, we know that the rate for our first generation students is almost 5% lower than for our non-first generation students. Our focus for this fall will be on encouraging first generation students, faculty, and staff to connect more easily and increasing advocacy for these students. “CLA First Gen” stickers are available in Todd 231. Put the sticker on your door, laptop, water bottle, travel mug, or anywhere else students will see it. This sticker should be a conversation starter and an indicator to students that wherever it is displayed, questions, concerns, achievements, etc. can be shared freely with someone who knows what it feels like to be the first in a family to attend college.

## CLA Events & Announcements

- **MT Engage Week:** Support events sponsored by CLA departments & centers through October 2.
- **Tennessee STEAM! Festival:** “Communicating Science Through Story-Telling: From Plato to Crispr” presented by Andrei Codrescu will be in SCI 1006 on Wednesday, October 16 at 6:30 PM.
- **Strickland Lecture Series:** Join the Department of History on Tuesday, October 22 at 6:30 PM in the JUB’s Tennessee Room. To commemorate the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci’s death, Dr. Paula Findlen (Stanford) will present a lecture entitled “Leonardo’s Library: How a Renaissance Artist Discovered the Meaning of Books.”
- **Kiss Me, Kate:** Passions run high as leading lady Lilli Vanessi and her ex-husband, actor/director Fred Graham, battle onstage and off in a production of Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*. With romance, comedy, sophistication, and behind-the-scenes high jinks, *Kiss Me, Kate*, combines the irreverent humor of two brilliant writers: Cole Porter and William Shakespeare. Runs October 24-27 in Tucker Theatre. Tickets are available online at [mtsuarts.com](http://mtsuarts.com).
- **Holocaust Studies Lecture:** Francis Cutler, a second generation survivor, will deliver a free public lecture on Wednesday, October 30 at 2:30 PM in the JUB’s Tennessee Room.
- **Joe Navarro Workshop:** On Wednesday, November 6, FIRE will host retired FBI Special Agent, Joe Navarro, for a one-day only workshop. MTSU employees may register for a discounted price of \$150 by using code EMPLOYEE at check-out . Registration is open online at [mtsu.edu/fire](http://mtsu.edu/fire).
- **Joys of the Season:** Join us for the annual showcase by our MTSU Arts students and faculty on Sunday, December 1 at 3:00 PM in Tucker Theatre. Tickets will be available at [mtsuarts.com](http://mtsuarts.com).
- **2020 LGBT+ College Conference:** Will Langston (Psychology) is seeking a CLA representative to serve on the conference’s advisory board. If you would like to volunteer, please email [Will](mailto:Will). Click [here](#) for more information about next semester’s conference.

# Sharing Our Story



We are still working to promote the value of liberal arts to the campus and wider community. This billboard is currently on I-24, and with your help there can be more in the future. The Division of Marketing and Communications is a great partner in the effort to enhance the University’s library of photos and videos related to CLA departments to better promote our programs. Please keep the Dean’s office notified of faculty, staff, student, and alumni successes so we can share your good news.



## Sharing Your Expertise

**Cathy Sgambati**, Public Relations Specialist in Marketing and Communications, would like information about your expertise in order to connect you with media requests. If you would like to be available for interviews, please contact Cathy at [Cathy.Sgambati@mtsu.edu](mailto:Cathy.Sgambati@mtsu.edu) or (615) 898-5348 to make sure she has updated information for you.

## Sharing My Gratitude

For all the deeds, great and small, that you do to enrich the lives of our students; for your contributions to knowledge; for your creativity; for the lives you change—thank you. It is an honor to serve alongside you, and I look forward to continuing our work together to strengthen the Liberal Arts at Middle Tennessee State University.

—Karen Petersen

