

# NEWS & information

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Sidney A. McPhee



*Welcome to the  
Fall 2018 Semester!*

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

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

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

I also invite you to visit my blog at [mtsu.edu/President](http://mtsu.edu/President) for updates and information from my office.

**True Blue!**

DR. SIDNEY A. MCPHEE

## THE STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY

MTSU is a special community—25,000 faculty, students, and administration members strong. Innovative and life-changing work emanates from MTSU on a daily basis. MTSU has indeed carved out a unique position among public universities.

Our work is shaped by our history and traditions, and defined by our role as a public university and the value that we bring to Tennesseans, and to residents in our neighboring states. We can, and should, take great pride in the faculty accomplishments and institutional progress achieved throughout the past year, our student success stories and the steps we've taken to make it possible for students to stay enrolled and complete their degrees, and the overall

*continued on page 2 ►*

*We must ensure that  
students graduate with  
a high level of knowledge  
and the advanced  
competencies that  
employers require.*

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# COMMITTED TO THE QUEST

Considering the cost of college, students can't afford not to graduate, especially if they have student debt. Yet, American universities suffer from chronic attrition. About a third of college freshmen don't return for a second year. Universities have tried various strategies to keep students on a path to graduation, but nationally the six-year completion rate hovers at 57 percent. Attrition isn't just expensive for students. Universities take a hit too—especially in Tennessee, which in 2010 began using outcomes rather than enrollment numbers to calculate higher education funding. At that time, a 3,000-student freshman class at MTSU could expect to lose 900 students the first year. Only half the class would graduate within six years.

The Quest for Student Success, which the University launched in 2013, radically rethought the University's approach to attrition. While MTSU has always targeted at-risk populations for support, our new Office of Student Success is boosting every student's chance to succeed. Working collaboratively, the University has overhauled student advising, developed fresh options for academic help, and redesigned courses that are traditional stumbling blocks to graduation. At the same time, we are using predictive analytics—an approach more commonly associated with health care than higher ed—to fight attrition in a

highly surgical way. Predictive data can help identify students who are at statistical risk of attrition even if they don't fit into traditionally "at-risk" population. Armed with this knowledge, our faculty and advisors can watch them to spot any problems early and get them back on track.

The results of the Quest have been dramatic, and it has become a standard by which other such initiatives are measured. In 2017, MTSU was one of just 45 American universities invited to join Re-Imagining the First Year, an initiative sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) and funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to help other institutions improve their student success, too. And recently, AASCU extended an invitation to me to share our student success initiatives with university presidents from across the country.

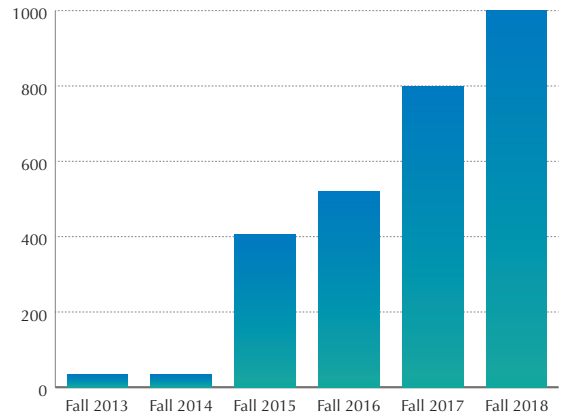
Here are the most recent updates regarding our collective work to improve student success at MTSU. Thank you for your help in achieving these gains.

**Under the leadership of Provost Mark Byrnes**, work continues to revise and update MTSU's Quest for Student

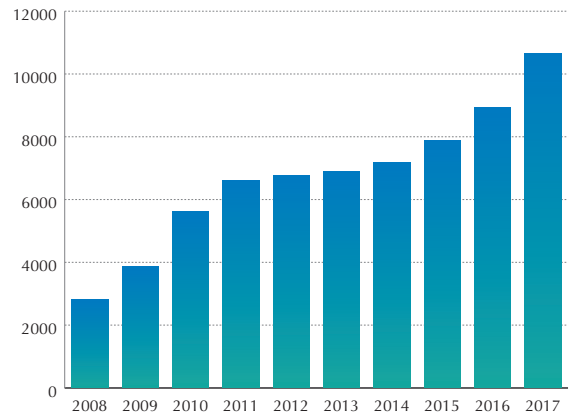
Success 2013–16. Since the launch of the original Quest, MTSU has witnessed unprecedented outcomes on key student success measures. For example, the full-time freshman retention rate has increased from 69 percent to 76.8 percent. Similar increases in retention have been observed for every student category (sophomores, juniors, seniors) and across all colleges.

Accomplishments like these have drawn national attention, and MTSU's student success initiatives have been highlighted in the *New*

MTSU Dual Enrollment



MTSU Fall Online Course Enrollments



*York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, and more than a dozen other national publications.

Input is being solicited from across the University for the revised plan, Quest for Student Success 2025. Current members serving on the Quest committee include:

**Mark Byrnes**, provost (committee chair)

**Joe Bales**, vice president for university advancement

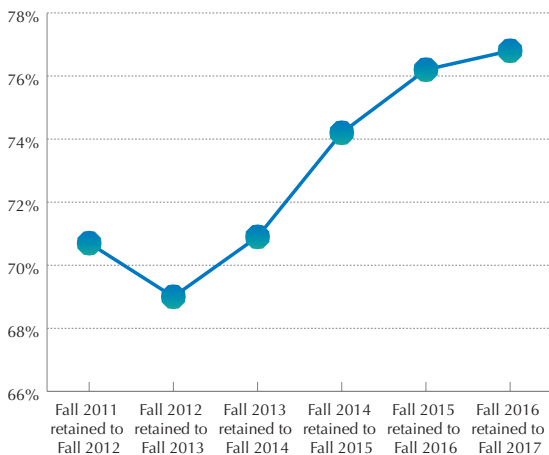
**David Butler**, vice provost for research and dean, College of Graduate Studies

**Jeff Gibson**, professor and chair, Department of Theatre and Dance

**Joey Gray**, associate professor, Department of Health and Human Performance, and 2017–18 Faculty Senate president

**Mary Hoffschwelle**, professor, Department of History and director, MT Engage

MTSU Full-Time Freshmen Retention Rate





Mark Byrnes



Joe Bales



David Butler



Jeff Gibson



Joey Gray



Mary Hoffschwelle



Faye Johnson



Marva Lucas



Susan Myers-Shirk



Ken Paulson



David Schmidt



Deb Sells

Please be on the lookout for additional information, and do not hesitate to contact any member of the work group if you have questions or need additional information. Find out more about this very important initiative at [mtsu.edu/provost/quest-2018](http://mtsu.edu/provost/quest-2018).

Nearly a year ago, a group of dedicated academic advisors began meeting to devise a comprehensive professional development and training plan. Through their efforts, the Advisor Mastery Program (AMP) was created and implemented. AMP provides our advisors with access to a wide-ranging series of professional development and training opportunities. This includes anything from webinars, lunch-and-learns, sessions led by advisors and others from across campus, and workshops featuring nationally recognized student success experts.

Through their participation in these sessions, advisors earn points with the goal of attaining annual AMP certification. Twenty-nine advisors were recognized for completion of the Advisor Mastery Program at an advisor annual retreat and workshop in April.

Today, two committees guide this important work. The Professional Development Committee is chaired by **Amber Bollinger**, advisor in the Jones College of Business. The Training Committee is led by **Janae Daniels**, an advisor in the College of Media and Entertainment.



Amber Bollinger

The Advisor Mastery Program will host Florida Atlantic University's **Jennifer Bloom** on campus Sept. 13–14. Bloom co-founded the Appreciative Advising and Appreciative Education movements. She will conduct an Appreciative Administration session on Thursday, Sept. 13. Please RSVP to [Amber.Bollinger@mtsu.edu](mailto:Amber.Bollinger@mtsu.edu) if you would like to attend.

**Learner support for MTSU students** continues to evolve. Two primary components of learner support at MTSU are free tutoring and Supplemental Instruction (SI). Although in operation for a relatively short period of time, both tutoring and SI have evolved rapidly and are crucial components of MTSU's efforts to support students.

**Free tutoring is now offered** for more than 200 courses each semester. In 2017, students spent 15,557 hours in tutoring, a 120 percent increase over 2015. MTSU's tutoring program was highlighted nationally in an article published in *EDUCAUSE Review*.

**Supplemental Instruction** has also quickly become a core component of our system of learner support. The first SI courses were implemented as a pilot in 2016–17, involving 57 course sections across three colleges with a potential to impact 3,047 students. In 2017–18, SI had grown to serve 118 course sections across five colleges with a potential to impact 4,990 students. MTSU's SI efforts have been recognized nationally.



**Faye Johnson**, associate provost for planning and partnerships

**Marva Lucas**, professor and chair, University Studies

**Susan Myers-Shirk**, professor, Department of History and director, General Education

**Ken Paulson**, dean, College of Media and Entertainment

**David Schmidt**, vice provost for international affairs

**Deb Sells**, vice president for student affairs and vice provost for academic and enrollment services

**Rick Sluder**, vice provost for student success and dean, University College

**Data resources: Chris Brewer** and **Sylvia Collins** of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Research



Rick Sluder

**In Fall 2017, Rick Sluder**, the leader of MTSU's Office of Student Success, was identified as one of 25 state leaders from across the country for making a difference with educational technology. Named as an "EdTech Hero" by EdScoop.com, Sluder was recognized for work occurring on the MTSU campus involving the application of predictive analytics in student success.



Supplemental Instruction session leader Feby Dawoud provides her unique approach to student instruction through group exercises and team components.

**MTSU is a participant**, along with other selected universities, in the Survey of Student Experiences. This project is coordinated by the Coalition of Urban Serving Universities and the Association of Public and Land Grant Universities. The purpose of the project is to build awareness of the psychological components of student success to understand how programs, policies, processes, and communications impact student persistence and retention. The goal is to use this knowledge to increase and expand the efficacy of existing student success strategies at MTSU. Five institutions from the cohort will be selected and provided with multi-year funding to further develop and implement lessons learned.

**MTSU was one of 22 institutions** selected by AASCU to participate in an Institutional Transformation Assessment. This project, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is designed to enable institutions to understand their strengths and weaknesses in student success initiatives related to (a) leadership and culture, (b) policy, (c) strategic finance, and (d) institutional research. **Scott McDaniel**, professor in University Studies, served as project leader.



Scott McDaniel

**In June, researchers** representing the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation visited MTSU to study work completed as a part of the Quest for Student Success. Representatives met with MTSU staff to learn about strategies that might be used by other universities to enhance leadership capacity, institutional research, and strategic finance in student success initiatives.

**Finally, let me state** that students rely on MTSU academic advisors, who work tirelessly to guide them toward a successful educational future, even if that means countless appointments, emails,

and phone calls. Among those advisors is College of Liberal Arts advising manager **Lucy Langworthy**, who was recently recognized nationally for her diligence with an award from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA). Langworthy received the 2018 Region 3 Excellence in



Lucy Langworthy

Advising-Advising Administrator Award. NACADA prides itself as a professional association that promotes student success while providing opportunities for professional development, networking, and leadership for a diverse membership. The association includes 10 regions throughout the U.S. and Canada, and Region 3 is composed of Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and West Virginia. **This is the third consecutive year an MTSU College of Liberal Arts advising center staff member has won a NACADA award.** Past winners include Brad Baumgardner for the Region 3 Outstanding New Advisor Award and Matt Hibdon for Excellence in Academic Advising for Region 3.

True Blue! **MTSU**

Scott McDaniel (left to right), award recipient Jim Hamby, Jean McDaniel, award recipient Megan McManus, and Craig McDaniel are pictured as the McDaniels congratulate winners of the McDaniel Teaching Excellence Awards. The awards provide funds for graduate students who plan to teach.



## TECHNOLOGY

Several important IT projects taking shape at MTSU truly highlight our collective focus on student success.

### New Instructional Design Team Approach

ITD recently introduced a new course design/redesign service—Instructional Design Teams—to assist faculty in creating pedagogically sound, highly engaging, multimedia-rich learning environments. Currently being piloted on Introduction to Astronomy, Interpersonal Communication, General Psychology, and Personal Financial Planning, courses are created by a team of experts—on subject matter, pedagogy, technology, accessibility, multimedia development, and assessment—to optimize teaching/learning and promote student success. This approach allows faculty to utilize the expertise of the team without having to become an expert in all the areas addressed by the team members.

### Banner Upgrade

MTSU will upgrade to the Banner 9 version this fall. Ellucian calls it

“no ordinary upgrade” because “it delivers a fresh user experience, all new tools, and significantly improved capabilities.” There will be a new user interface known as Application Navigator (App Nav for short) that replaces underlying Banner 8 technology being phased out, including Oracle Forms, and eliminates the need to run Java in the browser. Some of Banner 9’s advantages include:

- eliminating users’ browser compatibility problems
- ending dependency on Internet Explorer and allowing for full browser support (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, MS Edge)
- offering a Google-like experience for navigating throughout Banner Admin pages (formerly INB), with multiple ways to search

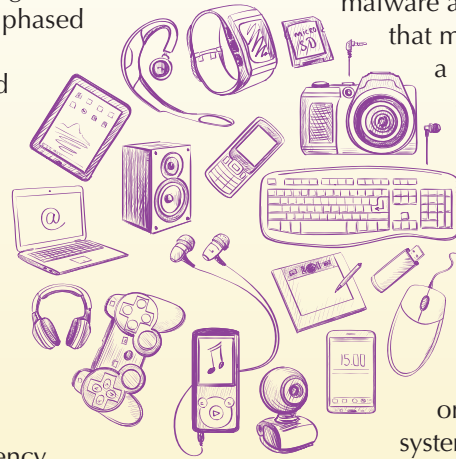
The Self-Service Banner portion of PipelineMT will be receiving the Banner 9 upgrade beginning in 2019.

### Next-Generation Antivirus

ITD purchased licensing for Sophos Intercept X next-generation antivirus this summer, which uses a combination of traditional, signature-based antivirus protection for known viruses along with malware and machine learning that monitors for files acting in a malicious manner. Plans are to deploy to the campus this fall.

### Multi-Factor Authentication

MTSU has embarked on a project to implement multi-factor authentication on all major technology systems that are accessible from the internet. The primary goal is to protect MTSU accounts from credential theft via phishing attacks. The opt-in period began May 1 and will be mandatory for employees by this October and for students by February 2019. To learn more, visit [mtsu.edu/security/mfa.php](https://mtsu.edu/security/mfa.php). [MTSU](https://mtsu.edu)



Near the beginning of the Fall 2018 semester, nearly 1,400 students who had registered for classes failed to make arrangements for payment of tuition and fees. Due to the generous donations from our Trustees to the emergency scholarship fund, we were able to provide assistance to several of these students with outstanding balances.

**True Blue!**

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees\* committees are:

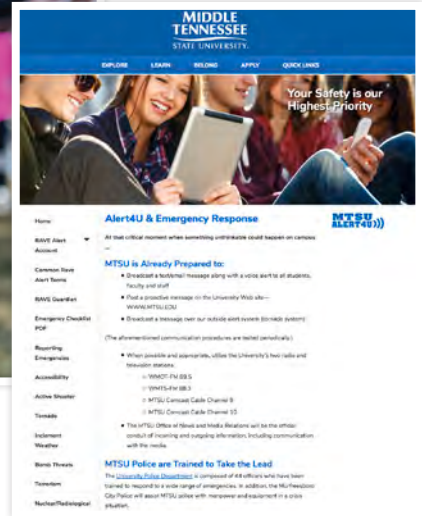
- Executive and Governance
- Audit and Compliance
- Finance and Personnel
- Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics

Board committees meet on Aug. 28 and Nov. 13.

Full Board of Trustees meetings will be held Sept. 18 and Dec. 4.

*\*Dates subject to change. Check [mtsu.edu/boardoftrustees](https://mtsu.edu/boardoftrustees) for updates.*

*\*MTSU Board of Trustees: Policy on Board Committees, Section 7. Quorum: A majority of the voting members of each standing or special committee shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. In the absence of a quorum, those attending may adjourn the meeting until a quorum is present. Check [mtsu.edu/boardoftrustees](https://mtsu.edu/boardoftrustees) for the most current information. [MTSU](https://mtsu.edu)*



## CAMPUS SAFETY

MTSU continues to emphasize campus safety as a top priority by utilizing a number of resources to protect our population. Perhaps the most critical is our fully functioning, highly visible University Police Department that patrols our campus, uses community policing to engage our students, and quickly responds to emergencies. Reach them anytime at 615-898-2424 or dial 2424 from campus phones.

Alerts for campus emergencies are sent via our Critical Notification System, which is operated by Rave Mobile Safety and has almost 27,000 registered users. Emergency messages are distributed via texts, emails, and phone calls, as well as posted to the University's website and social media accounts.

While MTSU students, faculty, and staff are automatically registered to

receive Rave email alerts, only those who've added phone numbers to their notification preferences will also receive a text message and/or recorded phone call. All current students, faculty, and staff can verify and update their Rave notification preferences by using PipelineMT usernames and passwords at [getrave.com/login/mtsu](http://getrave.com/login/mtsu).

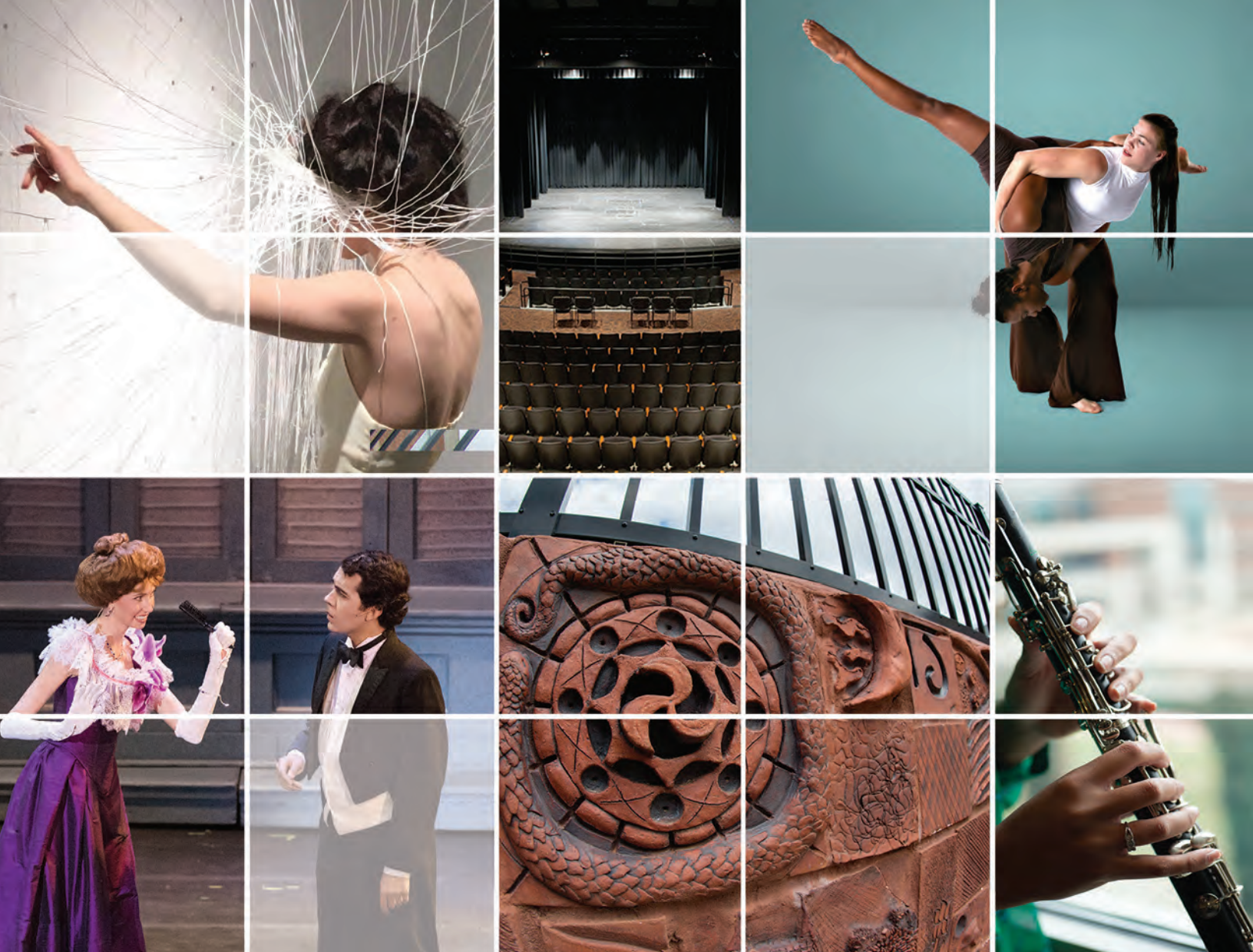
Please also visit MTSU's Alert4U page at [mtsu.edu/alert4u](http://mtsu.edu/alert4u), which contains a wealth of information about our alert system, active shooter protocols, tornado warnings, and other emergency responses.

Other available resources include our Raider Patrol personal

escorts service and the Rave Guardian app, which includes a panic button feature that connects directly to police.

Meanwhile, video surveillance has expanded throughout campus to assist police investigations, as well as better respond to situations in real time. [MTSU](http://mtsu)





*The College of Liberal Arts invites you to experience the variety of great shows, exhibits, and performances from our performing and fine arts departments during the fall semester.*

*Department of Art and  
Todd Art Gallery present*

**Faculty Exhibition**

Aug. 27–Sept. 15  
Opening reception: Sept. 8  
Todd Art Gallery (Room 224A ),  
Todd Hall

*School of Music presents*

**MTSU Salsa Band**

Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m.  
Hinton Music Hall,  
Wright Music Building

*Department of Theatre  
and Dance presents*

**9 to 5: The Musical**

Nov. 8–10, 7:30 p.m.; Nov. 11, 2 p.m.  
Tucker Theatre, Boutwell Dramatic  
Arts Building

*MT Dance Program presents*

**Fall Dance Concert**

Nov. 29-Dec. 1, 7:30 p.m.  
Tucker Theatre, Boutwell  
Dramatic Arts Building

*MTSU Arts presents*

**Joys of the Season**

Dec. 2, 3 p.m.  
Tucker Theatre, Boutwell  
Dramatic Arts Building

For a full calendar of events or to  
learn how to become a member of the  
MTSU Arts Patron Society, please visit  
[mtsuarts.com](http://mtsuarts.com).





# FALL 2018 BUDGET AND SALARY OVERVIEW

The final state budget, proposed by Gov. Bill Haslam and approved by the legislature, included enhancement funds that resulted in a \$2 million state appropriation increase for MTSU. However, this reduction was offset by budget enhancement funds, which resulted in a \$2 million state appropriation increase for our University due to progress made in our own student success outcomes and in meeting and exceeding the goals set forth by the state regarding student progress, graduate outcomes, and the overall educational attainment rate.

At its June meeting, the MTSU Board of Trustees approved a combined tuition and mandatory fee increase of 2.88 percent. New funds from this increase, along with the appropriations increase, will:

- cover MTSU's portion of the state-mandated 2.5 percent pool for salary increases
- allow for partial implementation of the salary compensation plan
- pay for faculty promotions
- provide funding to support student success

The governor's budget did partially fund the salary increase this year.

At the same quarterly meeting, our Board of Trustees approved a plan to split the 2.5 percent salary pool into two parts:

1. cost of living adjustments (COLA), effective July 1, 2018
2. addressing needed market adjustments through the compensation plan, effective October 1, 2018

The COLA strategy was for an across-the-board (ATB) salary increase for eligible MTSU employees of 1.5 percent or \$500, whichever was greater. This salary increase applied to all unrestricted and restricted regular full-time and part-time, benefit-eligible employees and participants in the post-retirement service program on the payroll as of June 30, 2018. Faculty increases were effective Aug. 1. Part-time employees received a pro-rated payment. These increases do not apply to adjunct faculty, temporary employees, graduate assistants, or student workers. If grant funding is available, increases for grant employees are charged to the appropriate grant, and increases for auxiliary employees are funded from auxiliary revenues.

The balance of the salary pool, along with an additional \$2 million, is reserved to implement part of the University's compensation plan for employees on the payroll as of June 30, 2018. These market adjustments will be effective Oct. 1, 2018.

The Board of Trustees also approved revisions to the University's compensation plan effective July 1, 2018. The first of these changes was the approval for Human Resources to recommend a 6 percent salary increase or minimum of the new pay range for an employee whose position has been reclassified

to a higher pay grade. For employees whose positions are reclassified more than one pay range, the recommended increase in their salary will be 9 percent. Exceptions outside these guidelines still will require approval of the provost/vice president or president. The second change was the approval for Human Resources to award the greater of 6 percent of the current salary or a salary based on relevant experience, up to the midpoint, for current employees who are selected for another position on campus.

The state legislature again provided funding to match eligible employees' deferrals in the 401(k) plan, which may be between \$20 and \$50 per month, and for longevity payments at \$100 per year of creditable service up to a maximum number of 30 years.

In addition, the state budget included \$8.2 million in capital maintenance funds for MTSU for piping and manhole replacement, mechanical and electrical updates for data and communication centers, elevator modernizations, and roof replacements.

The governor recommended \$86.2 million in capital outlay funding for all of higher education, which included \$35.1 million for a new academic classroom building for our College of Behavioral and Health Sciences (*see the construction update on page 10 for more information*). [MTSU](http://mtsu.com)



# CONSTRUCTION/PARKING/TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Numerous campus construction projects are ongoing or were recently completed. Here is a brief update on those recent and current projects:



## Middle Tennessee Boulevard

- Currently under construction
- Scope of work:
  - » Widening 0.8-mile section of Middle Tennessee Boulevard between East Main and Greenland to a divided four-lane street
  - » Landscaped median with dedicated turn lanes
  - » Improved pedestrian walks and crossings
  - » Bike lanes
  - » Improved lighting
  - » New underground utilities
  - » Monument entry walls to MTSU campus
  - » New drop-off at Murphy Center
  - » Improvements to the Faulkinberry Drive intersection
- Completion expected in December



## Academic Classroom Building

- New center for the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

- Consolidating of functional areas to the Criminal Justice Administration, Psychology, and Social Work departments
- Critically needed classrooms, offices, and lab spaces provided
- State funding received July 13
- \$39.6 million total project cost
- 91,000 square feet
- Building site located north of the Student Union across MTSU Boulevard
- Sitework construction (site utilities and grading) starting late August; project completion expected summer 2020
- Building project manager: Turner Construction Co.
- Project architect: Bauer Askew Architecture

## Parking Services Facility

- New home for Parking Services, including parking permits, bus maintenance, and personnel offices
- Design phase completed
- Bids opened Aug. 22
- Construction starting this fall and finishing in winter 2019
- Located on City View Drive
- \$3.4 million total project cost
- 13,000-square-foot building area

## Parking and Transportation Improvements

- \$1.580 million construction cost
- New surface and lighting at Greenland Drive parking lot
- New sidewalks and lighting along Alumni Drive and Military Memorial Drive
- Improved pedestrian access to Livestock Lot and new lighting
- Wider sidewalks along Founders Lane
- Currently under construction, with completion this fall
- Small roundabout at Military Memorial and Champion Way

## Peck Hall Renovations

- \$924,000 construction cost
- Interior improvements, including new lighting at corridors and refinishing of terrazzo flooring on second and third levels
- New ceiling and lighting at breezeways
- New furnishings for courtyard areas
- Project completion this fall



## Dining

Changes are occurring in the Student Union. We are replacing the Dippers venue and installing a “restaurant rotation” concept. Rotation options will include:

- Barbeque District (Texas BBQ)
- BibimBox (Korean food)
- Medi-Eats (Mediterranean-inspired cuisine)
- Noodle Fix (global noodle dishes)
- O-mori Ramen Bar (build-your-own Ramen dish)
- Road Trip America (regional American cuisine, such as New England classics)
- Taco del Seoul (Korean flavors and Mexican fusion)
- Zoca (Mexican fare)

We also will begin offering breakfast at Steak 'n Shake this fall. Breakfast options include biscuit sandwiches, breakfast tacos, Royale Steakburger, and Country Breakfast Bowl. [MTSU](http://mtsu.edu)





## ADMISSIONS

Our Admissions staff continues to work tirelessly both to sustain our ongoing operations and to fuel our plans for growth, all the while maintaining strong support of the Governor's Drive to 55 push as well. Our key annual recruiting event, the True Blue Tour, gets bigger and better each year. Joining me on these recruitment tours to various locations throughout Tennessee—and even beyond the state's borders to Alabama, Georgia, and Kentucky—are other top University administrators, deans from all the University's academic colleges and Walker Library, and counselors from Financial Aid and Admissions. The end result is a wonderful opportunity for prospective students and their parents to hear firsthand from MTSU representatives in their own backyards, as well as get important information about admission and financial aid. This is a prime opportunity to explain the unique educational experience MTSU offers.

We are adding an event to host our Rutherford County and other middle Tennessee students on our campus as a kickoff to the True Blue Tour this year. Including that event, there will be a record 14 stops this year on the True Blue Tour and 13 associated luncheons to host high school guidance counselors and community college faculty and administrators as well.



## Campus Tours

While we focus a tremendous amount of effort to take a little of MTSU to hometowns across the state and beyond, it's still a fact that getting a student to visit our beautiful campus is what is most likely to seal the deal with regard to their enrollment. Our on-campus recruiting team and our Blue Elite tour guides hosted more than 17,000 prospective students and their guests this year, showing them what MTSU has to offer.

Regularly scheduled tours begin at 10 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. each weekday. Saturday tours are scheduled each month in addition to our Preview Day events, and special tours are arranged by request through the Admissions campus tours office. [MTSU](http://mtsu.edu)

## Fall 2018 True Blue Tour student reception schedule

*(All times 6 p.m. local time)*

### Clarksville

Tuesday, Sept. 25  
Wilma Rudolph Event Center

### Williamson County

Tuesday, Oct. 2  
Franklin Marriott Cool Springs

### Nashville

Thursday, Oct. 4  
Millennium Maxwell House

### Bowling Green, Kentucky

Wednesday, Oct. 10  
Holiday Inn University Plaza

### Louisville

Thursday, Oct. 11  
Louisville Marriott East

### Chattanooga

Tuesday, Oct. 16  
Chattanooga Convention Center

### Atlanta, Georgia

Wednesday, Oct. 17  
Hyatt Regency Atlanta Perimeter  
at Villa Christina

### Johnson City

Tuesday, Oct. 23  
The Millennium Centre

### Knoxville

Wednesday, Oct. 24  
The Foundry

### Huntsville, Alabama

Monday, Oct. 29  
Huntsville Space  
and Rocket Center

### Birmingham, Alabama

Tuesday, Oct. 30  
Birmingham Marriott

### Memphis

Tuesday, Nov. 6  
Esplanade Memphis

### Jackson

Wednesday, Nov. 7  
Jackson Country Club

*true* **BLUE TOUR**

# STUDENT LIFE

Research tells us that the first six weeks of the semester are critically important for student success. 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.

During the 10 freshman CUSTOMS orientation sessions that took place this summer, our Division of Student Affairs staff has been talking with students about the Connection Point program and the importance of attending at least six events by Sept. 6. In addition to meeting new people and having a great time, students will receive an event-inspired button designed especially for each event and the opportunity to win some great prizes!

Students are asked to bring their mobile devices to the activities so staff can record their attendance. This allows Student Affairs staff to monitor our students' involvement to ensure they are connecting with our community. Students who are not connecting on campus will be contacted by staff to determine how we can assist them to become more involved in the MTSU community.

During 2017–18, 88 percent of first-semester freshmen participated in at least one Connection Point activity, which is a 5 percent increase over the previous year. Participation in this program is also positively linked with academic performance. MTSU students not attending any events earned a significantly lower grade point average than active Connection Point participants. The highest GPAs correlated with those students attending the greatest number of events.

Connection Point (2017–18)	
Events attended	Average GPA
1–2	2.50
3–4	2.61
5–6	2.70
7+	2.80

Students attending one to two events earned an average 2.5 GPA; those participating in three to four events averaged a 2.61 GPA; students attending five to six events averaged a 2.7 GPA; and those attending seven or more events earned an average GPA of 2.8.

Connection Point activities will kick off at 6 p.m. Friday, Aug. 24 with Dinner and a Carnival on the Student Union Commons.

The MTSU community marks our 17th University Convocation at 5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 25 in Murphy Center. This year's summer reading selection is *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson, who will be the keynote speaker for Convocation. *Just Mercy* is the story of a young lawyer fighting on the frontlines of a country in thrall to extreme punishments and careless justice. It is an inspiring story of unbreakable humanity in the most desperate circumstances and a powerful indictment of our broken justice system and the twisted values that allow it to continue.

The Equal Justice Initiative, headed by Stevenson, recently opened the National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama. This memorial is dedicated to victims of lynching perpetuated by white supremacists throughout our nation's history. MTSU's Student Government Association will sponsor a student trip to the memorial during the Fall

## EXCURSION ONE

CHECK INTO AT LEAST 6 EVENTS BY SEPTEMBER 6

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 24**  
Dinner and a Carnival  
Student Union Commons,  
6:00 p.m.–dark

**SATURDAY, AUGUST 25**  
University Convocation, Murphy Center  
and President's Picnic,  
Hall of Fame Lawn,  
5:00 p.m.  
Picnic immediately following Convocation

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 26**  
Shut Up and Dance  
Tucker Theatre,  
2:30 p.m.

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 28**  
Meet Murreboro  
Student Union Commons,  
10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 28**  
#MTBaeWatch Beach Party  
Recreation Center Sundek,  
5:00–7:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 30**  
Student Employment Fair  
Student Union Commons,  
11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 31–MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 3\***  
Events hosted in residence halls  
Information will be posted in the hall lobbies

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 31**  
MTSU at Vanderbilt Football Game  
Vanderbilt Stadium, Nashville

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4**  
Department Fair  
Student Union Commons,  
11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5**  
Volunteer Fair  
Student Union Commons,  
10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6**  
Back to Business Courtyard Bash  
Business and Aerospace Building Courtyard,  
11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

**Crash the Commons**  
Student Union Commons,  
6:00–10:00 p.m.

**FOR EVENT DETAILS AND A LIST OF ALL CONNECTION POINT EVENTS, GO TO [MTSU.EDU/CONNECTION](http://MTSU.EDU/CONNECTION)**

\*Not a Connection Point event (buttons will not be distributed)

**CONVOCAION 2018**  
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 25  
5:00 p.m.  
Murphy Center  
Keynote: Bryan Stevenson  
Book: *Just Mercy*

2018 semester. More details will be available early in the semester at [mtsu.edu/sga](http://mtsu.edu/sga).

Convocation will be immediately followed by our President's Picnic in Floyd Stadium. Stevenson will be available to sign copies of his book, and food and "game-day" activities will be available for all. Please join us for this True Blue tradition!

In collaboration with the College of Media and Entertainment, Shut Up and Dance will be the Connection Point highlight at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 26 in Tucker Theatre. This interactive and exciting show, featuring some of Nashville's finest musicians and hit-makers, is an opportunity to learn about our most fundamental freedoms through the inspiration, activism, and censorship that lie in the untold stories of some of America's favorite and most famous songs.

You can learn more about the Connection Point program and events at [mtsu.edu/connection](http://mtsu.edu/connection). **MTSU**

## ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

There are so many wonderful and impactful developments occurring in our academic community that I could not possibly cover them all in the pages of this newsletter. The following, then, offers but a small snapshot of the kinds of transformative efforts occurring in our colleges and academic units across campus.

### College of Education

**Texas Instruments partnered with MTSU** for its premiere workshop on effective teaching of K–12 mathematics. Twenty-four MTSU graduate students and educators from around the Southeast attended “Teaching Strategies for Success in a Mathematics Classroom,” a two-day professional development exercise on campus in June. The emphasis was on a guilt-free, nurturing, and vibrant classroom environment where students in grades 6–12 treat their mistakes as opportunities to learn and students are encouraged to persevere as they tackle challenging tasks.

Other features of the workshop included strategic use of technology, effective questioning, and authentic opportunities for writing in mathematics. Because MTSU was the first university to host the teaching strategies workshop, participants’ feedback will help to shape future sessions at other institutions. The workshop is an example of how MTSU supports area teachers, as well as the entrepreneurial relationship between business and the University.



Emily McTyre and Kelsey Keith

### Honors College

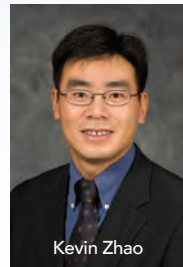
**Emily McTyre and Kelsey Keith** are the first MTSU Honors College students to

travel to the United Kingdom as part of the four-week UK Summer Fulbright Institute. MTSU students have received 9- and 12-month **Fulbright Awards**

through the years, but this marks the first time to crack the summer program barrier. The Fulbright Award offers undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to travel abroad and participate in research, study, and teaching. However, the UK Summer Fulbright Institute is more competitive because any student nationwide with a 3.75 or higher GPA may apply. In 2017, only 59 students were offered awards. Keith’s program at the University of Bristol focused on arts, activism, and social justice. McTyre, a Video and Film Production major, spent her time at the University of Birmingham.

### Jones College of Business

**The Real Estate student team** finished No. 7 out of 39 student teams nationally in the Real Confidence Investment Challenge.



**The Jones College TVA Investment Challenge team**, led by **Kevin Zhao**, earned a \$4,020 bonus from the Tennessee Valley Authority as the reward of alpha (risk-adjusted excess

return) on our TVA portfolio for the year of 2017. MTSU’s TVA portfolio returned 25 percent, beating the S&P 500 total return by 2.5 percent.

**MTSU’s Business and Economic Research Center** released a comprehensive wage and benefits study of mid-state manufacturers to help economic development officials attract and keep good-paying jobs in the region.

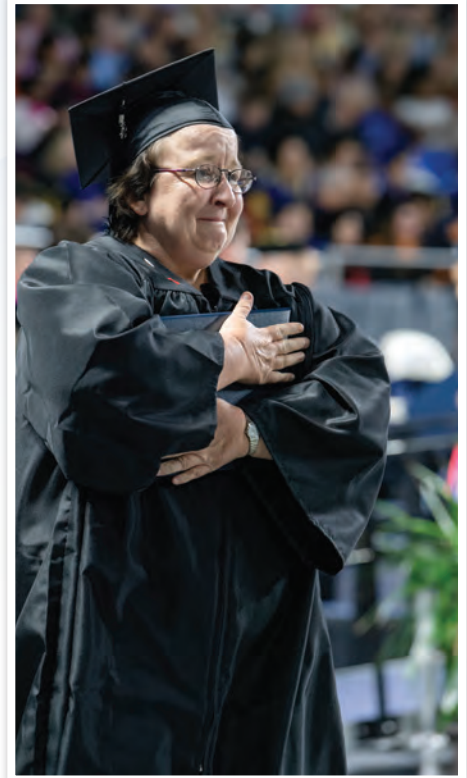
### University College

**MTSU continues to make progress** in our dual enrollment (DE) initiative. Four years ago, only 34 students were enrolled in DE courses. That number grew to 798 in Fall 2017 (with a goal of 1,000 for Fall 2018).

**Online courses** increasingly have become an important part of the delivery of instruction at MTSU. In Fall 2017, the number of students enrolled in online courses surpassed the 10,000 mark for the first time.

That number was 2,819 in 2008 and 7,876 as recently as 2015.

Also in 2017–18, **faculty developed a total of 70 new online courses**, while redesigning an additional 54 existing online courses. Be on the lookout for more information as we work together to increase the number of students served.



**University College’s Adult Outreach initiative** continues to work diligently to draw students back to campus who left MTSU without completing their degrees. In the summer of 2017, with funding support from the Office of the President, staff from University College and other areas from across campus conducted a calling campaign for four weeks. The dedicated team contacted students who had left MTSU more than a year prior but had completed at least 60 hours. The results were impressive: phone calls to 4,574 students were made; 1,952 voice mails were left; 500 students who were contacted asked for transcript evaluations to see what was needed to complete their degrees; 15 students learned they had sufficient credits to graduate immediately; and 30 students enrolled in Fall 2017.

**Tennessee's Reverse Transfer program** provides students with a unique opportunity to complete degrees that were started, but not completed, at one of our state community colleges. More than 47,000 students have started their studies at a Tennessee community college but transferred to a four-year institution without completing their associate's degrees. Under the reverse transfer program, credits earned at a four-year institution can be counted toward the community college associate's degree. Based on data released this summer, MTSU continues to lead the state in the number of students taking advantage of this program. Since it began in Spring 2015, 646 MTSU students have been awarded associate's degrees through reverse transfer, an important program for students to apply credits they have earned.

## Basic and Applied Sciences

**MTSU's partnership with Atlanta-based Delta Air Lines** will not only be a boon for the Aerospace Department's Professional Pilot majors, including student veterans, but also for prospective students, the department's growth, and potentially Delta's major hubs in Nashville, Atlanta, and Cincinnati. Delta announced in July it plans to hire more than 8,000 pilots during the next decade to replace current pilots reaching retirement age and to support planned growth in its fleet and network. Simultaneously, the airline launched the **Delta Propel Pilot Career Path Program** with eight universities nationwide to reach out to the next generation



of pilots, including MTSU Pro Pilot majors. The Collegiate Pilot Career Path application process began in August. Successful candidates will be provided a "qualified job offer," detailing a defined path and an accelerated timeline to become a Delta pilot. The fact that MTSU is only one of eight selected by Delta for the rollout of this program speaks to the high regard the industry extends to graduates of our Aerospace program.

**Attendees of the Brewers Association's national 2018 Craft Brewing Conference** in Nashville got a sneak peek of MTSU's Fermentation Sciences laboratory under construction at Steel Barrel Brewery and the Hop Springs agritourism destination. Conference-goers at the May open house at the 80-acre Hop Springs construction site were offered bus rides from Nashville's Music City Center to Hop Springs, where they sampled Steel Barrel beers and reviewed plans for the facility.

**Media and Entertainment**

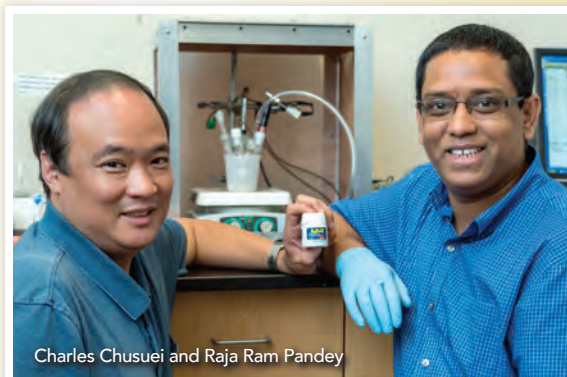
**MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment**, in conjunction with the School of Music and several other campus partners, hosted the **2018 Association for Popular Music Education Conference (APME)**, which attracted 175 popular music educators from throughout the nation for four days of intensive learning, demonstrations, and networking in June. **Odie Blackmon**, coordinator of MTSU's Commercial Songwriting program, oversaw this year's conference. Topics ranged from bridging classical and pop in music theory courses to using technology in composing and producing music to incorporating rap, Broadway, rockabilly, hip-hop, heavy metal, and world music into classes for all ages. "Roughly 25 percent of attendees are from high schools," said Blackmon, who also is a producer,



**Three years of investigation** conducted by MTSU Chemistry faculty researcher **Charles Chusuei**, two of his graduate students, and other researchers has led to a unique design for monitoring acetaminophen to prevent overdose that results in liver damage. The findings made the inside cover for the May issue of *Electroanalysis*, an international journal devoted to electroanalysis, sensors, and bioelectronic devices. MTSU doctoral student **Raja Ram Pandey** and master's candidate **Hussain Alshahrani** worked with

Chusuei and Sergiy Krylyuk, Elissa H. Williams, and Albert V. Davydov of the Materials Science and Engineering Division at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The group made the discovery through electrochemical detection of acetaminophen (a common ingredient in Tylenol and other pain medications) with silicon nanowires. The researchers have produced an electrode that can measure acetaminophen concentrations in real time. The device works by inducing a chemical reaction at the electrode surface that generates an electrical signal. The signal is then interpreted by a computer to determine chemical concentration.

"The sensor has potential application for monitoring toxicity in blood, detecting acetaminophen overdose," Chusuei said. "Acetaminophen toxicity is a common cause of unintentional poisoning."



Charles Chusuei and Raja Ram Pandey



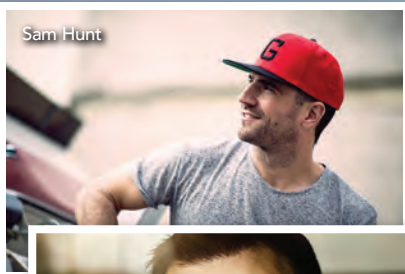
## Media and Entertainment

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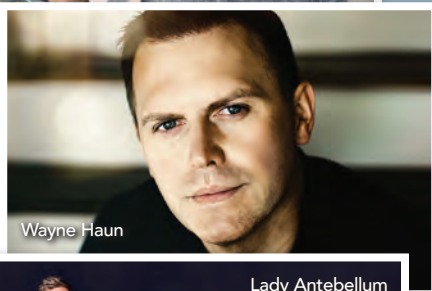


Odie Blackmon

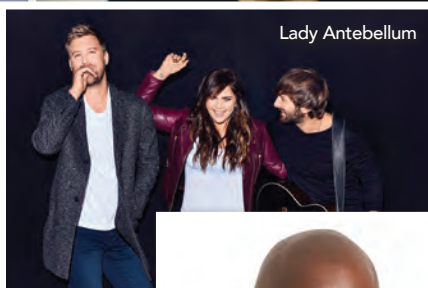
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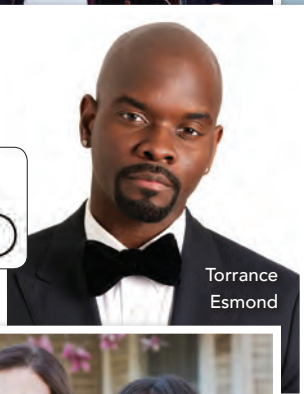
Sam Hunt



Wayne Haun



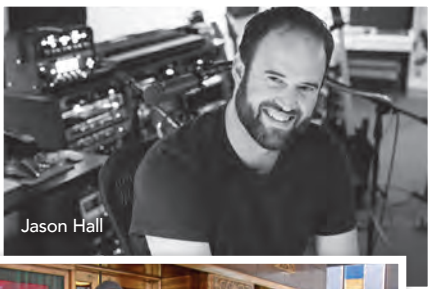
Lady Antebellum



Torrance Esmond



The Secret Sisters



Jason Hall



The half-dozen MTSU-connected nominees at the 60th annual **Grammy Awards** made their alma mater proud with their respective accomplishments. **Jason A. Hall** ('00) engineered Little Big Town's *The Breaker*, a Grammy nominee for best country album. Former MTSU student **Sam Hunt's** "Body Like a Back Road" earned best country solo performance and best country song Grammy nods. Country trio Lady Antebellum, which includes former MTSU student **Hillary Scott**, also had dual nominations: best country duo/group performance and best country album for "You Look Good" and *Heart Break*, respectively. Two-time Grammy winner **Torrance Esmond** ('03), an MTSU Music Business graduate known professionally as Street Symphony, also sought gold for his work on the best children's album nominee *Rise Shine #Woke* by the Alphabet Rockers. The Secret Sisters—MTSU College of Media and Entertainment alumna **Laura Rogers** ('09) and her sibling Lydia—earned a nomination for a best folk album Grammy for *You Don't Own Me Anymore*, their third release. Producer/songwriter **Wayne Haun** ('00), a School of Music graduate from MTSU's College of Liberal Arts, produced three of the five best roots gospel album nominees. Since 2007, MTSU alumni, faculty, and former students have brought home 16 Grammy Awards in categories from classical to gospel to bluegrass to rap. MTSU alumnus **Garry Hood**, who has spent the last three decades as the head stage manager for the Grammys, was in charge behind the scenes at the event again this year. Dean **Ken Paulson**, Recording Industry Chair **Beverly Keel**, and I were on hand in New York City to congratulate the nominees and recognize MTSU's ties to the Grammys. It was the fifth year MTSU held pre-Grammys events at the site of the music industry's biggest ceremony. MTSU again partnered with the Americana Music Association, this time honoring The Secret Sisters, for a pre-Grammys celebration. MTSU also was out front at the Grammys when Fleetwood Mac was honored as this year's Person of the Year by MusiCares, the centerpiece charitable event of the Grammys. Students from MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment worked behind the scenes at the event, held at Radio City Music Hall. MTSU was able to participate as a sponsor to the MusiCares event, thanks to the generosity of Brentwood-based American Addiction Centers (AAC), led by former MTSU student **Michael Cartwright**. Later in 2018, also due to the support of AAC, a select group of MTSU students and faculty got a behind-the-scenes look at the **Academy of Country Music Awards** in Las Vegas. Five Media Arts students shadowed the ACM's preparations for the national telecast of the 53rd awards, which showcased the biggest names and emerging talent in country music. The students also visited the National Association of Broadcasters conference in Las Vegas.

*Since 2007, MTSU alumni, faculty, and former students have brought home 16 Grammy Awards in categories from classical to gospel to bluegrass to rap.*



Above right: Academy of Country Music CEO and MTSU alumnus Pete Fisher (center right) and MTSU President Sidney A. McPhee (center left) are shown April 15 with the visiting MTSU contingent on the floor of the ACM Awards Show at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Bottom left: MTSU students from the College of Media and Entertainment participated in behind-the-scenes experiences in support of events related to the 60th annual Grammy Awards celebration in New York City. Pictured Jan. 26 at Radio City Music Hall are (left to right) Foster Riggs, senior; President Sidney A. McPhee; Michael Ryan May, senior; L.B. Rogers, senior; Professor Matt Foglia; and Siara Strickland, senior.



► continued from page 15

publisher, songwriter, and Grammy nominee. The APME conference was “a great opportunity to recruit” people to come to MTSU, as well as expose attendees to a host of talented workshop presenters, Blackmon said. MTSU’s Department of Recording Industry was recently listed for the fourth consecutive year on *Billboard’s* list of the nation’s top music business schools, alongside Berklee, UCLA, and New York University. The magazine highlighted MTSU’s ongoing “learning experiences” for Recording Industry students at the annual Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival in nearby Manchester.

## Liberal Arts

The MTSU Debate team experienced one of the best seasons in its more than century-long history. The team of 25 students won 148 awards during 2017–18. Accomplishments include



the top national award in International Public Debate Association (IPDA) team competition; victory in the varsity division at a Spokane, Washington, tournament; and first place in the varsity division and second place overall at the Pi Kappa Delta Honor Society National Tournament in Nashville. The team also hosted a friendly competition with the Irish Times National Champions from Ireland in March. MTSU Debate captured a total of five top national awards, a regional championship, and two Tennessee state titles, as well as numerous individual victories in various tournaments throughout the season. The team coach is **Pat Richey**, director of forensics and associate professor of Communication Studies. Richey is IPDA historian and has a 20-year career in the practice of intercollegiate debate. State Sen. Bill Ketrone passed a resolution this year congratulating the Blue Raider team on an exceptional debate season.



The leader of MTSU’s new **Africana Studies** degree program was the recipient of its highest award for minority faculty. **Louis Woods**, an associate professor of History, received the 2018 John Pleas Faculty Award. The Africana Studies program, which officially began last August, now has 19 majors. Woods’ areas of expertise include public history, civil rights history, federal housing policy, African-American World War II naval history, and African-American veterans’ access to the G.I. Bill. He earned his bachelor’s degree in Africana Studies from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1999, graduating Phi Beta Kappa. Woods obtained his master’s and doctoral degrees in African-American History in 2001 and 2006, respectively, from Howard University in Washington, D.C. I think we’re blessed to have faculty members like him.

A **College of Liberal Arts faculty member** was awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend—a highly competitive and prestigious grant—for the second year in a row. **Suzanne Sutherland** was granted \$6,000 for her project “War, Diplomacy, and Knowledge in Habsburg Europe.” Only three faculty in Tennessee were awarded fellowships.



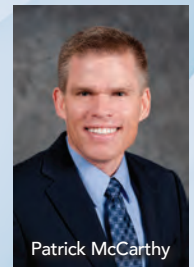
The Stansky Prize is awarded annually by the North American Conference

**Mark Doyle’s book, *Communal Violence in the British Empire: Disturbing the Pax* (2016) was named co-winner of the Stansky Book Prize.**

on British Studies for the best book published anywhere by a North American scholar on any aspect of British studies since 1800.

## Behavioral and Health Sciences

An MTSU program that prepares graduates to make workplaces better has received top kudos from a professional group and a private-sector website. The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, the premier professional organization in the field, ranked MTSU’s Industrial/Organizational Psychology master’s program No. 1 in the nation. The society published its final rankings in the Spring 2018 issue of *The Industrial-Organizational Psychologist*. **Patrick McCarthy** is the graduate program’s director and an MTSU Psychology professor. The significance of the ranking is heightened by the fact that I/O psychology is currently the fastest growing occupation in the country, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. The program is affiliated with MTSU’s Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness (COHRE) an independent consulting unit that offers valuable experience to our I/O Psychology students. Some of the clients COHRE has served since its 2003 inception include Goodwill Industries, Nissan, Procter & Gamble, State Farm, Cracker Barrel, and several local, state, and federal governmental agencies.



**National ranking organization collegechoice.net** rates MTSU’s Psychology bachelor’s degree among the top such degree tracks available online, placing the MTSU program 30th in the nation.

The **School of Nursing** formed a collaborative relationship with local high schools in recruiting Health Science majors, who now have guaranteed admission as MTSU freshmen.

The **Criminal Justice Administration program** established an exchange program with Northumbria University

in England, where students are able to go to law school as an undergraduate in the United Kingdom (and pay MTSU tuition).

## Walker Library

The James E. Walker Library extends classroom instruction through application:



**Walker Library is the first** among Tennessee university libraries to add a **Makerspace** as part of the library's cutting-edge services. Our faculty in a number of courses and disciplines are using the Makerspace technology to introduce innovative methods for student learning. Students from Graphic Design to Engineering Technology have incorporated signs, objects, parts, and pieces into their capstone projects.

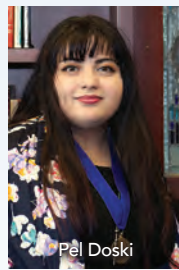
**Students are learning ways** to present their research in a digital format through the library's seminars in the use of a variety of programs from Geographical Information Systems (GIS), online exhibits, and even learning how to create podcasts.



**A notable exhibit** hosted by the Walker Library featured the Gospel Music Hall of Fame and served as the centerpiece for a series of gospel music mini-concerts in the library atrium.

## More news and notes

**Pel Doski** and **Leia Green** of Nashville are the latest MTSU students to earn **Fulbright Fellowships** to teach or conduct research abroad this year. Doski (Biology) and Green (Foreign Languages) are teaching in South Korea and Argentina, respectively. They join 14 former MTSU students who have accepted Fulbright awards since 2010. A third finalist, MTSU



senior **Hermon Phuntling** (Global Studies and Human Geography), from Knoxville, earned a Fulbright to teach in Thailand. Phuntling decided, however, to perform health care work with the Peace Corps in the African country of Benin during the next two years. The U.S. State Department

sponsors the Fulbright program to increase mutual understanding between people

in the United States and other countries by placing U.S. students in other nations to teach or conduct research for 8–10 months.



**MTSU and the Middle Tennessee Council of the Boy Scouts of America** (MTCBSA) signed a partnership earlier this year that will allow the University to be a greater resource for Scouting programs, particularly in science and technology. And, in doing so, MTSU will gain an opportunity to reach and recruit prospective students from the council, which serves 37 middle Tennessee counties and Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I was joined by former MTCBSA President **J.B. Baker**, who is now a member of the University's Board of Trustees, and Scout Executive **Larry Brown** in signing the memorandum of understanding. The council, based in Nashville, has more than 18,600 youth and their families participating in programs. It has been the fastest-growing of 270 nationwide councils the past two years, charting a 24 percent increase since 2015. Baker, a Nashville resident and owner and CEO of Sprint Logistics, is an Eagle Scout who has served on various council committees and is now a council trustee. The new agreement puts into play the educational resources of MTSU's College of Basic and Applied Sciences to engage Scouts in science and technology pursuits. The pact is based upon a similar Aerospace partnership the college forged four years ago with the Tennessee Wing of the Civil Air Patrol's cadet program. **MTSU**

At left: Cedric Dent and Angela Tipps lead the Women's Chorale performance in the Walker Library lobby.

f BLUE RAIDER ATHLETICS  
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#BLUERAIDERS

# RAIDERS



CHANDLER BREWER

TAVARES THOMAS

BRENT STOCKSTILL

DARRYL RANDOLPH

DARLUS HARRIS

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# MT ATHLETICS



Anyone who knows me knows that I love to brag about the performance of our Blue Raider athletes in the classroom. Here are some highlights from the spring semester that was:

- 185 of 323 (57 percent) of all student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher GPA.
- 108 (33 percent) of all student-athletes made the Dean's List with a 3.5 or higher GPA.
- 42 (13 percent) of all student-athletes had a perfect 4.0.
- 11 of 15 teams earned a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- Highest men's team GPA: men's tennis (3.776)
- Highest women's GPA: softball (3.441)
- Semester GPA for all student-athletes: 2.988
- Cumulative GPA for all student-athletes: 3.096

MTSU saw 53 student-athletes win the Conference USA Commissioner's

Academic Medal (3.75 or higher cumulative GPA) and 179 student-athletes listed on the C-USA Commissioner's Honor Roll (3.0 or higher cumulative GPA) during the 2017–18 academic year. The football team led the way in the honor roll category with 45 recipients. In the academic medal category, football and baseball had the most recipients with seven apiece.

**Blue Raider baseball, women's golf, and volleyball** all earned NCAA Public Recognition Awards in May—the third time in history that three MTSU teams have been honored and the first time since 2013–14. These awards are given to teams scoring in the top 10 percent in their respective sport based on their most recent multi-year Academic Progress Rate (2016–17). The women's golf program, led by 11th-year head coach Chris Adams, was recognized for the fifth straight year and had a

perfect score of 1000. Volleyball, also with a 1000 under head coach Chuck Crawford, and baseball, compiling an impressive score of 996 under former head coach Jim McGuire, were both honored for the first time.

**Each of our 17 athletic teams** earned a multi-year Academic Progress Rate (APR) of over 930 for nine years running, as the NCAA released its annual report in May. Every Blue Raiders sports team came in at over 969 (out of 1000) in this most recent multi-year rate that averaged scores from the 2013-14 through 2016-17 academic years. MTSU had 13 of 15 sports (indoor and outdoor track count as one) post at least 975 for the multi-year report, including women's golf and volleyball with a perfect grade of 1000. Four other sports exceeded 990: baseball (996), soccer (995), men's golf (992), and men's cross country (991). In addition to high levels of success in the multi-year APR, 12 of 15 sports earned scores of 980 or higher in the 2016–17 single-year APR, including seven teams boasting perfect marks of 1000 (men's cross country, men's golf, women's cross country, women's golf, softball, women's tennis, and volleyball).

**Softball's Morgan Harris, baseball's Aaron Aucker, and basketball's Ed Simpson** received the True Blue President's Award—the highest honor bestowed upon a current MT student-athlete who epitomizes all that is good in intercollegiate athletics. All three excelled in the classroom, community and on the field and court. They were



recognized in April at the seventh annual Raiders' Choice Awards, an Academy Awards-style show in Tucker Theatre highlighting academic and athletic achievements of our Blue Raider student-athletes for the academic year. Aucker and Simpson were the first co-winners on the men's side for the top award presented annually to a male and a female student-athlete that recognizes outstanding academic and athletic accomplishments, university/community service, and leadership. Harris already earned her degree in Leisure, Sport, and Tourism with a 3.86 GPA and is part of the Accelerated Bachelor's-to-Master's program. Aucker owned a 3.5 GPA in Biology and has completed 350 hours of working and shadowing toward his future career in dentistry. Simpson, now working for Boeing, had a 3.62 GPA as a Mechatronics Engineering major and spent countless hours designing and building robots as part of his curriculum.

### In competition: Our student-athletes also excel on the fields of play



Abike Egbeniyi

**Abike Egbeniyi, named the 2018 Conference USA Female Track Athlete of the Year** in June, took second place nationally in the women's 800-meter race at the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships. The rising senior, who is a native of Lagos, Nigeria, earned first-team All-American honors for her performance at the nationals in Eugene, Oregon. Earlier, Egbeniyi set new conference championship records and won gold medals at both the C-USA outdoor (800 meters) and indoor (400 meters) conference competitions.



Agnes Abu

Kigen Chemadi

**Three Blue Raiders—Egbeniyi, Agnes Abu, and Kigen Chemadi**—clinched second-team All-American honors at the NCAA Indoor Track and Field Championships in College Station, Texas. Egbeniyi (2:05.91) and Abu (2:07.36) placed 12th and 14th nationally in the women's 800 meters, respectively, while Chemadi was 13th place in the men's 3,000 meters.



**Our men's golf team** captured its first C-USA conference championship and first league title since 2009 with a 3-2 match play win over UAB in April. The Blue Raiders earned the league's automatic bid into the NCAA Regionals.

**In May, our softball team** also won their first C-USA Tournament Championship and advanced to the NCAA Regional for just the second time in program history. The sixth-seeded Blue Raiders, the lowest seed to ever claim a



C-USA title, came from behind for the second time in as many days to defeat Florida Atlantic 7-6 in Charlotte, North Carolina. MTSU's 39 wins were the most since 2001, when the squad won 41 games. The 2000 team won MTSU's only previous league championship in softball, while competing in the Ohio Valley Conference.

**L.A. Woodard** (Mets, 16th round), **Austin Dennis** (Astros, 20th round), and **Jake Wyrick** (Reds, 30th round) were all selected in major league baseball's first-year player draft in June.

**For the first time in program history**, the Blue Raider softball team has a player in the pros. Senior outfielder **Precious Birdsong** was drafted by moh-BEEL! USA in the sixth round with the 24th overall pick in the American Softball Association Draft in June. During her four years at MTSU, Birdsong left her mark on the program with career records in runs (158), hits (243), singles (207), triples (14), stolen



Precious Birdsong



Jake Wyrick



Austin Dennis



L.A. Woodard

bases (132), and stolen bases attempted (155). She also set new season marks in batting average (.443, 2017), triples (six, 2015), and runs scored (50, 2018).

## Slam-Dunk Hires

A new era for Blue Raiders men's basketball began this year as **Nick McDevitt** was selected as the 20th head coach in MTSU school history.

I've had the privilege of working at several major universities and never before have I had such a powerful first impression from a prospective coach. I was simply blown away by Coach McDevitt's enthusiasm, his energy, and how he shares our vision and values.

The 38-year-old McDevitt, who is a native of Marshall, North Carolina, arrived in Murfreesboro following a five-year tenure as head coach at the University of North Carolina–Asheville. He led the Bulldogs to a 98-66 overall record, including three consecutive 20-win campaigns in the last three seasons. McDevitt's teams also made three consecutive postseason appearances, starting with a trip to the NCAA Tournament in 2016 before playing in the 2017 CollegiateInsider.com Tournament and the 2018 National Invitation Tournament.

His run at UNC–Asheville actually first began in 1997 when the guard signed to play for the Bulldogs.



Following the end of his playing career in 2001, former head coach Eddie Biedenbach immediately appointed McDevitt to his staff as an assistant coach. After 10 years as an assistant under Biedenbach, McDevitt was elevated to associate head coach prior to the 2011–12 season and took over the head job in 2013 upon Biedenbach's resignation. At MTSU, he succeeds former head coach Kermit Davis, who left for Ole Miss after leading the Blue Raider program for the previous 16 years.

Beyond basketball, McDevitt was a 2017 finalist for the Skip Prosser Man of the Year Award, presented annually to those who not only achieve success on the basketball court but who also display moral integrity off of it as well.

## The New Skipper

In addition, **Jim Toman** was recently named the 22nd baseball coach in MTSU history. He brings a wealth of experience and success to the program as both a head coach and top assistant in two Power 5 conferences (ACC and SEC).

Toman's hiring signals a new era for the Blue Raiders as the highly-successful mentor is the first baseball coach in 45 years to not have direct ties to the program.

Regarded as a top-flight national recruiter, he fashioned a 329-205-1 record in his nine seasons as head coach at Liberty in the Big South Conference. Toman also spent 18 years as Ray Tanner's top assistant at the University of South Carolina and North Carolina State University.

During his career, Toman has presided over 15 Top 25 recruiting classes, including 11 consecutive during one stretch. [MTSU](https://www.mtsu.edu)

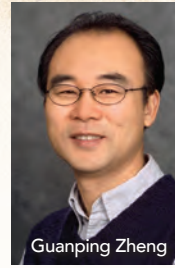


# INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

MTSU is always seeking to increase its international undergraduate and graduate student enrollment, expand its study abroad opportunities, and develop more faculty and student exchanges. MTSU also actively seeks out student exchange and research collaborations with international partners.

Here are just a few recent highlights from our International Affairs efforts. *(Please also see the special section on our work in China on page 24.)*

- During the 2016–17 academic year, 23 MTSU Signature faculty-led programs served a total of 233 students. Approximately 70 percent of our students who studied abroad through MTSU participated in one of these Signature programs in Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, England, Finland, France, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Russia, Taiwan, and Vietnam.
- This fall will see the culmination of one of our first 3+1+1 programs with Guangxi University in Nanning, China. After four years of planning and preparation by many people on campus, including **Guanping Zheng** and **Peter Cunningham** with the support of Jones College of Business Dean **David Urban**, Associate Dean **Kim Sokoya**, and MTSU Provost **Mark Byrnes**, our new incoming Chinese student enrollment is expected to increase this fall by 108 percent with the enrollment of the new Guangxi cohort.
- Started by International Affairs five years ago, MTSU’s partnership with the **University of Salford** in the United Kingdom had a banner year of activity with a scholar-residency exchange program in the fall, a student exchange of four students during the academic year, and the co-sponsorship of an academic conference held at Salford in Manchester, England. [mtsu.com](http://mtsu.com)



Guanping Zheng



Peter Cunningham



David Urban



Kim Sokoya



Mark Byrnes





## CHINA UPDATE

This past spring, I traveled to China with state Sen. **Bill Ketron** and businessman **Paul Martin**, the first graduate of our Honors College. The trip was organized by and in support of MTSU's Confucius Institute. **The highlight of the trip** occurred in Nanning, where I announced the creation of a new institute in concert with the Guangxi Botanical Garden of Medicinal Plants, our primary research partner in China. MTSU agreed to create a joint ginseng institute in partnership with Guangxi to study, develop, and promote Tennessee-grown herbal products for sale in Asia and other emerging markets. The new International Ginseng Institute, with MTSU faculty researcher Iris Gao serving as its American director, will spin off from Tennessee Center for Botanical Medicine Research (TCBMR), which will continue to work with the garden on other projects. This collaboration between MTSU, the Guangxi Botanical Garden, and business and industry is pioneering and a model for other types of collaborations between our countries.

Schoolchildren and parents participating in this year's MTSU exchange with Dongcheng Educational Group in Hangzhou, China, join their Chinese counterparts as part of a ceremony July 16 to welcome the American delegation.

**Miao Jianhua**, director of the Guangxi Botanical Garden, said the garden plans to spend the equivalent of about \$30 million in U.S. dollars for the construction this August of a new lab at the Nanning complex to support the effort. The garden has been designated as one of China's top 10 research facilities in funding priority. He also outlined the garden's plans to hire up to 130 researchers and staff devoted to the institute.

I was accompanied at the signing by two local businessmen, **Ted LaRoche** and **Edward Chiles**, whose Greenway Herbal Projects firm has given \$2.5 million toward MTSU's herbal research. Martin arranged for the first contribution to the new institute: a \$2,500 check from the Walter and Edith Loebenberg Foundation.

Ginseng, an over-the-counter supplement used to boost the immune system, was one of the first herbs from traditional Chinese medicine to be widely used. It is popular with those suffering from colds or flu or whose immune systems are suppressed, such as cancer patients. Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina are the top three producers among 19 states that can legally harvest and trade ginseng in the U.S.

The University's pursuit of the study of ginseng goes back to 2013, when Ketron encouraged MTSU to use its China ties and research expertise to help Tennessee farmers add ginseng as a cash crop. The senator also helped gain state funding in November 2013 for a demonstration plot on the MTSU campus.

Other highlights of the summer trip to China included:

- Lectures at **Guangxi University** and **Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine** (the two universities agreed to look for ways to sync up with the institution, especially given the creation of the International Ginseng Institute) in Nanning; North China University of Technology; Hangzhou Normal University (MTSU's partner in the operation of the Confucius Institute); and Hunan Normal University. The lectures serve as part of an effort to share American culture with high-ability students considering potential study abroad opportunities.
- Attendance at the annual meeting of the MTSU Confucius board with Hangzhou officials. Leaders from both universities discussed potential joint research, new scholarships for Chinese students to attend MTSU, and ways to showcase MTSU's Center for Chinese Music and Culture.
- A meeting with Hangzhou alumnus and Chinese business magnate **Jack Ma**, founder and executive chair of the Alibaba Group. Ma also is chair of Alibaba Business School at the Hangzhou university.



## Return Visit

I returned to China this summer with a group of Nashville-area schoolchildren, parents, and educators as MTSU renewed its exchange with a top Chinese magnet school system.

The 36-member delegation, in the country for two weeks, visited classrooms, participated in enrichment activities, and visited Chinese families







in their homes as part of the reciprocal exchange with Dongcheng Educational Group.

It is the fourth such trip that my wife, **Elizabeth McPhee** (who is a retired Murfreesboro City Schools teacher), and I have led. Other such MTSU delegations visited China in 2012, 2014, and 2016, while Dongcheng students came to Murfreesboro in 2013, 2015, and 2017.

One of the things we stress on every trip is that this is not a vacation. While we want to make the trip meaningful for these families from a cultural perspective, this is a learning laboratory for all of us.

Dongcheng, an affiliate of Hangzhou Normal University, oversees a network of magnet-style schools in this eastern China region. The goal of the back-and-forth exchanges is to share best practices with educators on both sides of the Pacific Ocean.

Both MTSU and Hangzhou Normal are major comprehensive universities in their countries, but trace and honor their respective lineages as teacher schools.

Dongcheng President **Zhang Lidong** singled out first lady McPhee for her work to organize the classroom experiences for the children of both countries.

MTSU's Confucius Institute, a joint effort between Hangzhou Normal and MTSU, oversees the annual exchange. Families paid their travel expenses to China, but most housing and travel costs were covered by the Institute and Dongcheng.

Named for the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius, the institute is sponsored by China's Education Ministry to promote Chinese language, history, and culture through tours, exchanges, and university partnerships. There are more than 440 institutes in 120 countries.

Under the leadership of **Guanping Zheng** as director, MTSU's institute has helped teach Chinese language and culture to more than 2,000 students in seven Tennessee counties. It also offers long-distance language training via satellite TV and the internet.

While on the summer trip, MTSU also renewed an academic partnership that allows Actuarial Science students enrolled at Ningbo University in China to finish their classwork and earn their degree at our Murfreesboro campus. The program can accept up to 40 students each academic year. The

Actuarial Science program trains students to apply mathematical skills and statistical techniques to manage risks and solve problems in insurance and pension programs. MTSU, through its College of Basic and Applied Sciences, is the only Tennessee university offering Actuarial Science coursework for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Ningbo, founded in 1986 and with an enrollment of about 25,000 students, is located in the eastern coastal province of Zhejiang, next to the East China Sea. [MTSU](#)

Left: MTSU first lady Elizabeth McPhee conducts a classroom demonstration July 16 for Chinese students at Dongcheng Educational Group in Hangzhou, China.

Below: Schoolchildren participating in this year's MTSU exchange with Dongcheng Educational Group in Hangzhou, China, take part in a classroom demonstration and learn a cultural dance as part of a ceremony July 16 to welcome the American delegation.





## TRUE BLUE VOTER

As the 2018 midterm election approaches, MTSU has launched a dynamic new program to boost the participation of college students.

Our Board of Trustees Chair **Stephen B. Smith**, Rutherford County Election Commission Administrator **Alan Farley**, and I recently introduced the True Blue Voter initiative in June at



MTSU's Miller Education Center. The True Blue Voter initiative is designed to engage students in civic participation and leadership

through voting. The county election commission is providing expertise to inform MTSU students about absentee voting, early voting and voter registration.

At the time of the announcement, Farley said the True Blue Voter Initiative represents a model partnership between MTSU and the local election commission and sets an example

for other colleges and universities throughout the state to connect with students on campus during events like orientation and in other places where they live and study, making it easy and convenient for them to register to vote.

Throughout our summer CUSTOMS orientation sessions and at several fall semester events leading up to the Nov. 6 election, the Rutherford County Election Commission, MTSU Student Government Association, and leadership of the MTSU American Democracy Project (ADP) are providing expertise on registration procedures and voting practices.

The primary task of this partnership is to assist students in becoming successful voters through individualized processes that best fit their unique circumstances.

This effort is needed. According to the National Study of Voting, Learning, and Engagement, 44.5 percent of MTSU students voted in 2016. That's an increase from 44 percent in 2012, but still ranks below the national average of 50.4 percent for college students. As such, the

University is happy to support this effort to develop True Blue citizens who value and exercise their right to vote. Civically engaged college students are more likely to carry forward their civic involvement as they move into careers and future home communities, becoming engaged and active citizens for life.

The True Blue Voter initiative will provide support to the already successful ADP, led by **Mary Evins**, historian and associate professor in the University Honors College. MTSU is one of some 250 campuses across the country that seeks to promote civic knowledge and participation through ADP.

*The True Blue Voter initiative is designed to engage students in civic participation and leadership through voting.*

In the end, the True Blue Voter initiative seeks to increase the number of MTSU students who are registered to vote to 85 percent and those who vote to 55 percent by 2020.

MTSU's Smith deserves much of the credit for having the vision

for a partnership model with our University and the Rutherford County Election Commission working together to promote student voter registration. I can speak for our board chair when I say that he believes active involvement and personal investment in the classroom and in the community are hallmarks of the MTSU experience and that the True Blue Voter initiative is just the latest example of that truth at MTSU. [MTSU](http://mtsu.com)

## UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Private philanthropy continues to provide valuable resources to the University, impacting nearly every facet of our activities. Support from alumni and friends continues to be strong, with over \$12.7 million in actual gifts and realized expectancies in the last fiscal year. These totals continue to exceed the national averages for our peer institutions and should place MTSU among the top quartile nationally.

Among the more significant gifts received during the year were:

- A major donation of PLM (Product Lifestyle Management) software to our Mechatronics Engineering program, the largest gift of this type in University history.
- A gift of \$1 million in support of our Athletic Department's efforts to enhance its facilities.
- Two major estate gifts, totaling nearly \$1.5 million in support of student scholarships and programs.
- Over \$325,000 in donations during our first **True Blue Give** day, a 48-hour giving campaign,



far surpassing our \$250,000 goal. The Feb. 15–16 event drew donations from more than 600 friends of the University in our drive to support academics,

- athletics, and scholarships. Donors could pledge any amount, and matching contributions were secured for certain portions of the campaign. Raising scholarship support is a key priority since 90 percent of MTSU students qualify for some form of financial aid.
- Next, legendary country music superstar Charlie Daniels performed at the inaugural **MTSU Veteran Impact Celebration** June 28 at The Grove at Williamson Place. By night's end, Daniels, Journey Home Project co-founder David Corlew, and the nonprofit foundation's newest board member, MTSU alumnus and U.S.

Army Maj. Gen. **Terry "Max" Haston**, presented a \$100,000 check for the University's **Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center**. Coupled with more than \$41,000 raised through corporate sponsorship of tables, gifts in kind, and pledges, Daniels Center officials estimated about \$171,000 raised for MTSU's nationally recognized center. The 3,200-square-foot Daniels Center is the largest and most comprehensive veterans center in Tennessee and one of the largest in the nation. It serves MTSU's nearly 1,000 student veteran and military family members, giving them a one-stop shop to meet many academic, Veterans Affairs, and career needs. MTSU's efforts to give back would not be nearly as comprehensive and impactful if not for the individuals, businesses, governmental agencies, and nonprofits who have opened their hearts to provide so generously to MTSU's programs, centers, and initiatives. We celebrate these organizations and individuals for empowering our efforts. This year's sponsors included the Hiller Companies, Transition to Trades, Dollar General, the Nashville Predators, Barrett, FirstBank, Panasonic, Mapco, BlueCross BlueShield, Ole South, and the Journey Home Project. Ten



Retired Lt. Gen. Keith Huber, MTSU senior advisor for veterans and leadership initiatives, presenting flowers to Hazel Daniels

- other organizations and four individuals—retired U.S. Army Lt. Gen. **William "Bill" Phillips** and fellow MTSU alumni and veterans **Don Witherspoon, Bob Lamb, and Bud Morris**—also provided sponsorships. Supporting sponsors for the meal were Steel Barrel, Stones River Total Beverages, Mission BBQ, and The Grove.
- Last, our new corporate engagement efforts have resulted in more than 50 direct interactions with business and industry, including collaborative recruitment efforts with the Rutherford, Williamson, and Nashville Area chambers of commerce. These efforts are positioning MTSU as the region's primary source for college graduates, as well as an intellectual, cultural, and scientific resource. True Blue! **MTSU**



# RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

As a publically supported institution of higher learning, we take our role to serve the state of Tennessee very seriously, which includes educating undergraduate and graduate students who enter the workforce well educated and skilled. This role also involves conducting research and creative activities that produce knowledge, information, data, technologies, know-how, and other outcomes that are disseminated from MTSU to the whole state to help improve the economy, services, and quality of life for all Tennesseans.

New awards from the past year include:

**Dong Zhijiang, Joshua Phillips, and Chrisila Pettrey** (Computer Science), along with **Eric Oslund** (Elementary and Special Education), received a \$999,968 award from the National Science Foundation for their “Growing a Regional Computer Science Workforce” STEM education project.

**Cynthia Chafin** (Center for Health and Human Services), associate director for community programs, was awarded \$554,400 from the Tennessee Department of Health to continue the statewide training to better prepare first responders and medical examiners regarding the “Sudden Infant Death and Death Scene Investigation” program.

**Song Cui and Nate Phillips** (Agriculture) secured a \$499,924 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Non-Land Grant Program for their “Transitioning to Organic Forage Cropping Systems” research and extension project.

**James Rust** (Psychology) was given a \$800,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Education to support

the ongoing “School Psychology Internship Program.”

## Graduate Studies Update

In addition, the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) continues to shepherd key initiatives and develop and deliver programs that are of interest and in demand throughout the middle Tennessee area. Here are some updates:

**The college continued reshaping** the way it reaches out to prospective applicants. First, a digital marketing campaign through Facebook and LinkedIn ads allows CGS to reach prospective applicants in very precise ways. Prospective applicants click links embedded in social media ads to submit their contact information. CGS then can activate a communications plan that puts each person in touch with a specific program and moves them toward submitting an admissions application and enrollment in a program. CGS also has launched an initiative, in partnership with the academic colleges, to host Graduate School Information Sessions for current MTSU undergraduates. In these well-attended sessions, students have received basic information about grad school, how to choose a program, how much grad school costs, how to pay for it, and the return on their investment with an advanced degree.

**In order to increase the competitiveness of academic programs,** CGS

implemented a pilot block-grant model for funding graduate assistantships.

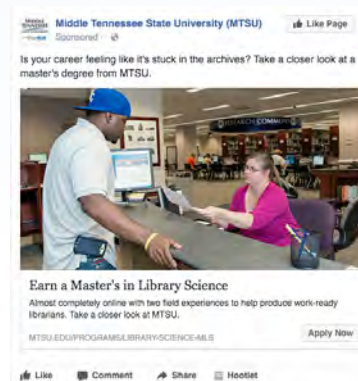
While programs are required to award a minimum amount of money, this pilot program allows academic programs flexibility to decide how much (based upon their previous number of graduate assistantship lines) a single graduate assistantship stipend should be. Fall 2019 will be the first semester that students are awarded using this model.

**Each month during the 2017–18 academic year,** CGS hosted luncheons/information-sharing sessions for

academic program directors, which were well attended. This forum has allowed CGS to communicate its goals and activities to the directors and vice versa. The forum also has allowed directors to ask important questions of CGS and each other. The luncheon sessions will continue this

academic year.

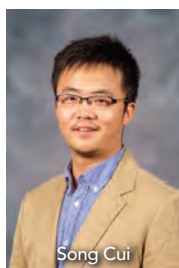
**CGS has convened a committee** to develop policies to support existing Accelerated Bachelor’s-to-Master’s (ABM) programs and to establish new programs. An ABM policies and procedures document will be available by the end of next summer. ABM programs allow undergraduates to begin taking graduate courses toward a master’s degree at the undergraduate price. When ABM students finish their bachelor’s, they only need to complete an average of 12 to 18 months of coursework to earn their master’s. ABM programs are important recruiting tools and help MTSU retain highly qualified, highly capable students from undergraduate through graduate school. [MTSU](#)



Dong Zhijiang



Cynthia Chafin



Song Cui



Nate Phillips