

NEWS & information

FROM THE PRESIDENT Sidney A. McPhee



Welcome to the Fall 2023 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. I also invite you to visit my blog at mtsu.edu/president for updates and information from my office.

ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Throughout 2022–23, our diligent team of freshman recruiters visited hundreds of high schools and college fairs across Tennessee and neighboring states, covering distances equivalent to circling the equator four times (more than 100,000 miles driven)!

Their efforts yielded an impressive 12% increase in first-year student prospects.

The University witnessed a historic surge in freshman applications to more than 13,000, a remarkable accomplishment considering last year’s record-breaking numbers.

This success owes much to the strategic expansion of our guaranteed scholarship program, aimed at attracting high-achieving students starting with a minimum ACT score of 22.

With healthy application numbers, the challenge turned, as it does each year, to yield. Deans, department chairs, faculty, and the whole campus met the challenge to continue presenting the best of MTSU to our admitted students to encourage them through the process of enrollment.

Attendance at our CUSTOMS orientation program was strong, and we are prepared for the more than 3,100 freshmen joining our academic community.

continued on page 5 ➤

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Earlier this year, I approved an integrated strategic planning process that will encompass efforts that were previously spread across three existing plans—the Academic Master Plan, the Quest for Student Success, and the Strategic Plan.

continued on page 2 ➤

<i>Enrollment and Admissions</i>1	<i>Student Life</i> 10
<i>New Strategic Plan and Mission Statement</i> 1	<i>Academic Updates</i> 11
<i>Budget and Salary Overview</i>2	<i>International Enrollment</i> 16
<i>True Blue Core/ New Gen Ed</i>3	<i>MTSU Online</i> 17
<i>Renewed Effort to Rename Forrest Hall</i>3	<i>MT Athletics</i> 18
<i>Free Speech Success</i>4	<i>Quest 2025</i>21
<i>Campus Planning</i>6	<i>Military Center</i>24
<i>Technology Update</i>7	<i>MTSU Arts</i>25
<i>University Advancement</i>9	<i>True Blue TV and Event Productions</i>26
<i>Technology Update</i>9	<i>Services by Blue Print Solutions</i>27

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN AND MISSION STATEMENT, CONT.

The 2025–2035 Strategic Plan will be organized around four pillars: academic quality, student success, engagement, and innovation.

Strategies for each of these pillars will be developed by subcommittees that include broad representation from faculty, staff, students, and alumni and community leaders.

The process begins in earnest this fall in the University Planning Committee. Its Mission Review subcommittee will articulate statements of purpose, values, and vision. A revised mission statement is targeted for approval by the Board of Trustees at its April 2024 meeting.

Concurrently, the Strategic Planning Committee will begin gathering information and ideas through a series of listening sessions with internal and external stakeholders next spring. A draft of the Strategic Plan will be developed next summer, and the campus community will have

additional opportunities to provide feedback throughout the fall of 2024. The goal is to finalize the Strategic Plan by early 2025.

I hope all faculty, staff, and students will be engaged in the process of mission review and Strategic Plan development. I encourage you to participate in activities such as:

- Responding to the mission review survey that should arrive in your email inboxes soon
- Attending the series of town halls and focus group sessions that will occur next spring

More details about these opportunities will be sent to you in the coming weeks and months.

I look forward to hearing your thoughts about goals and strategies that will build on MTSU's strengths and achievements and advance MTSU's stature as a major R2 comprehensive public university.

BUDGET AND SALARY OVERVIEW

The 2023–24 General Appropriations Act passed by the General Assembly included a \$9.8 million state appropriation increase for MTSU.

The final budget included net operating funds of \$3 million, partial funding for a salary pool of \$6.1 million to be distributed at the discretion of the University, and \$700,000 to cover increases in employee benefits.

At the June Board of Trustees meeting, the MTSU board approved the president's salary recommendation to provide a **3.2% cost of living allowance increase**, with a \$1,250 minimum. Raises were effective July 1 for administrative and classified staff and Aug. 1 for faculty. Based on the availability of funding from additional resources this fall, I may recommend additional salary increases.

The University received nonrecurring funding of \$2 million to provide continued financial aid for the Medical School Early Acceptance Program jointly administered by MTSU and Meharry Medical College.

The state's budget included \$19.9 million in funding for the Applied Engineering Building to cover inflationary increases since the project was originally funded two years ago.

In addition, the state budget appropriated \$5 million in capital maintenance funds for two of the nine capital maintenance projects submitted for funding. The approved projects are to repair, replace, and update centralized and decentralized cooling and heating plant systems, including all underground campus utilities and related work.

The General Assembly provided funding for the 401(k) plan for employees who contribute between \$20 and \$100 per month. That is a maximum match of \$100 per month for contributions of \$100 or more. In addition, longevity payments were again funded at \$100 per year of creditable service up to a maximum number of 30 years.

At the June quarterly meeting, the MTSU Board of Trustees approved a 2.98% increase in tuition and fees for the 2023–24 academic year.



TRUE BLUE CORE / NEW GEN ED

MTSU's new general education curriculum, the True Blue Core (TBC), is on schedule to launch in fall 2024.

During the 2022–23 fiscal year, the University General Education Committee approved more than 80 courses for the new Core, effective fall 2024. Throughout the year, faculty from across the University participated in preparing course proposals—revising current (legacy) courses and developing new courses for the Core.

This summer, the TBC team hosted a multiday professional development workshop on “Writing Across the Core,” facilitated by MTSU English faculty (Julie Myatt, Erica Cirillo-McCarthy, Kate Pantelides, and Eric Detweiler), and centered on how to use the TBC written communication outcome in Core teaching.

The upcoming year promises to be an exciting one, as faculty create additional new courses, design blueprints (collections of thematically related courses students take to navigate their

requirement), and develop opportunities for study abroad.

Our colleagues in Student Affairs, Enrollment Services, and Academic Advising will be busy preparing for spring 2024, when the first Core students register, with changes to the catalog, Banner, and DegreeWorks.

Finally, TBC Director Susan Myers-Shirk and TBC Implementation Coordinator Christina Cobb have been developing plans for the Center for the True Blue Core (CTBC). The CTBC will take the lead in marketing the program and recruiting new students, implementing assessment as reflective practice to ensure the quality of both the program and the Core classroom experience, communicating to incoming and current students the value of a Core education at MTSU, and helping them to see the ways in which the Core connects to and supports them in their majors, their careers, and their personal growth and well-being.



RENEWED EFFORT TO RENAME FORREST HALL

On June 23, we as a University posted public notice of our intention to again petition the Tennessee Historical Commission for a waiver that would allow us to rename Forrest Hall, the building that houses our Army ROTC detachment.

You may recall that our Board of Trustees, at its September 2021 meeting, voted unanimously to support my desire to remove the name of Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest, which I feel distracts from the values, goals, and priorities that we share as a modern, inclusive, and comprehensive university.

The structure was built in 1954 to house our Army ROTC. It was said that the 1958 decision to name the building after Forrest, the first grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, was to honor his notoriety as a military tactician. However, the timing of the decision, after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional, made many feel otherwise.

We teach history in our classrooms, with context and vigor, and through our substantial work led by the Center for Historic Preservation throughout the state and nation. We don't need Forrest's name on a building to educate our students. Such vestiges are best placed in a museum and the history books.

MTSU first announced plans to engage the community whether to rename Forrest Hall in June 2015. The announcement came following a mass shooting at a historically black South Carolina church that prompted a national discussion about Confederate iconography on public property. A task force I appointed at that time held open public meetings and forums before recommending in April 2016 to change the name.

Based on that input, I then sought approval from the Tennessee Board of Regents, MTSU's governing board at the time, which in June 2016 endorsed my decision to change the name. In September 2016, the University filed a

Petition of Waiver with the Tennessee Historical Commission, which by state law needed to sign off on the name change by a two-thirds vote. However, MTSU's petition was denied by a 17–5 vote in February 2018.

We were disappointed, to say the least.

A 2021 movement that led to the removal of the bust of Forrest that previously stood in the state Capitol rekindled discussion about the renaming of Forrest Hall. In September 2021, the MTSU Board of Trustees, the governing board that was formed after the University was made a locally governed institution apart from TBR, voted unanimously to support another attempt to rename the building.

I am very hopeful for a different outcome this time around. Saying now is the time to change the name of Forrest Hall isn't quite right. It should have been done long ago.

You can read the public notice and learn about our previous efforts to change the name at mtsu.edu/forresthall.

FREE SPEECH SUCCESS

If I were to ask a student or staffer which campus entity generates the most web traffic for the University, I believe they would probably guess either MT Athletics or Admissions.

But in fact, annual visits to the MTSU Free Speech Center website and *Encyclopedia of the First Amendment* soared by 1.1 million in the 2022–23 fiscal year to a new high of **more than 5 million users**.

That total makes up the largest percentage of the total web visitors the University receives on an annual basis.

Frankly, I couldn't afford to purchase that kind of marketing and advertising for the University using MTSU's entire marketing budget!

The Free Speech Center is obviously more, though, than just a very beneficial engine for web searches that swell MTSU's profile.

Its mission and societal impact speak to the very heart of what makes MTSU—and, indeed, America—great.

Let me explain in a story.

A recent Associated Press article centered around new threats to free speech in America.

The headline read, "Attacks on Free Speech Rights Are Rising, Experts Say."

The article featured remarks by MTSU Free Speech Center founder and director Ken Paulson, who stated that in recent years many states have reverted to the anti-speech tactics employed by people like Sen. Joe McCarthy during the "Red Scare" of the early 1950s.

"McCarthy and others tried to silence political opponents by accusing them of being communists or socialists, using fear and public accusations to suppress basic free speech rights," Paulson was quoted as saying. "We are seeing a concerted wave that we have not seen in decades."

In the face of this grave threat, Paulson posited a solution. The very best protections against censorship, he said, are awareness, insight, and a nationwide commitment to freedom of expression.



That's precisely what the MTSU Free Speech Center is all about. Through its website, its timely editorials, and its prowess as an expert to a national audience, the MTSU center is providing much-needed awareness, insights, and support for our precious freedoms of speech.

It's not just the Associated Press taking notice of MTSU's expertise on these types of matters. We as a university (through the Free Speech Center) are spreading the word to millions of Americans about the need to protect the First Amendment and our most fundamental freedoms.

Paulson—a former founding editor of *USA Today* and former dean of MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment—has been quoted in dozens upon dozens of media outlets nationwide in the past year.

As a result of this effort and focus on media outreach, the Free Speech Center—and MTSU—is now routinely treated as an authority by highly respected and neutral news sources on a topic of growing concern in our nation.

The center is successfully doing so while operating as a nonpartisan and nonprofit institution simply conveying the urgency of the work it does without stepping into politics or alarmism.

I want the campus community to know what the Free Speech Center is doing (and mimic it!).

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

It's also a testament to our remarkable University, its stellar academic programs, and the welcoming community we create that we continue to attract, admit, and enroll transfer students from both our community college partners and from other four-year universities.

Even amidst ongoing challenges in community college enrollments, the University's appeal remains strong, drawing transfer students in impressive numbers. In fact, this year's admission and enrollment of transfer students surpassed last year's figures. We anticipate welcoming a significant arrival of new transfer students in the coming fall.

Recruitment and admissions have their unique rhythms that distinguish them from the broader University community. While most of us turn our attention to the excitement a new semester brings and focus on this fall, our admissions recruiters have already begun to focus on the new recruitment cycle with an eye toward fall 2024! Our recruitment team has already hit the road to match the best students Tennessee has to offer in 2024 with the best university in the state, MTSU!

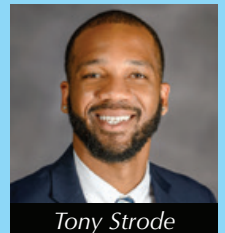
true BLUE TOUR

Our much anticipated 14-stop **True Blue Tour** brings MTSU to communities around Tennessee and also to stops in Kentucky, Alabama, and Georgia. This year, for the first time, the Atlanta event will focus on our **College of Media and Entertainment** and will include a "family reunion," as we invite alumni in the region who are professionals in the news and entertainment industries to meet prospective students, showcasing the tangible outcomes of the MTSU experience.



Truly, the most effective way for students to discover the essence of MTSU is to visit the campus. Here, amid the beauty of our surroundings and state-of-the-art facilities, students have the opportunity to engage with exceptional faculty and passionate peers. To facilitate this, we offer multiple tours daily throughout the week and several Saturdays throughout the semester. These tours are led by a diverse group of student tour guides, the **Blue Elite**. This fall we will host two extended tour opportunities—our True Blue Preview events—where we invite students and their families to visit campus and meet some of our faculty and college advising staff for insights into life at MTSU.

In other Admissions news, **Tony Strode is the new director of Undergraduate Recruitment**. Strode has a master's in Higher Education Administration and is currently enrolled in the Assessment, Learning, and Student Success Ed.D. program at MTSU. Before coming to the University five years ago, Strode had experience in management and sales positions that provided invaluable transferable skills, which he has applied to our work in student recruitment. Strode had served in the role on an interim basis for several months.



Tony Strode



MEET MTSU

in Murfreesboro

Wed., Sept. 13, 6–8 p.m.

MIDDLE
TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY.
trueBLUE TOUR
mtsu.edu/rsvp

CAMPUS PLANNING

Numerous improvements to our campus buildings are underway or have been recently completed. Here is a brief update.

AEROSPACE CAMPUS

Plans for the new Aerospace site in Shelbyville include approximately 105,000 square feet of educational space: an estimated 80,000-square-foot academic building with modern classrooms, class laboratory, and flight briefing, administrative, and support spaces along with a 25,000-square-foot maintenance hangar required to maintain the MTSU aircraft fleet.

TMPartners PLLC is the selected designer for the project, and we are currently getting the firm under contract. Total project cost is \$62.2 million.

The 16-acre site is located along Highway 231 and just west of the Shelbyville Municipal Airport. This parcel will initially be a lease with an option to purchase the area of land with the majority of the MTSU Aerospace Campus improvements for the Professional Pilot and Aviation Maintenance programs.

The remainder of the land will support MTSU flight operations, including aircraft maintenance hangar and aircraft tie-down/apron space, and will need to be located within the security perimeter of the airport per FAA regulations.

Estimated construction completion is fall 2027.



Middle Tennessee State University
and the City of Shelbyville
invite you to the

MTSU AEROSPACE SHELBYVILLE ANNOUNCEMENT EVENT

Thursday, September 21, 2023
2828 Highway 231 North, Shelbyville, TN 37160

Pre-show start at 9:30 a.m.
Event begins promptly at 10 a.m.

RSVP to Kimberly Edgar at kimberly.edgar@mtsu.edu
by Thursday, September 7, 2023. Parking available.

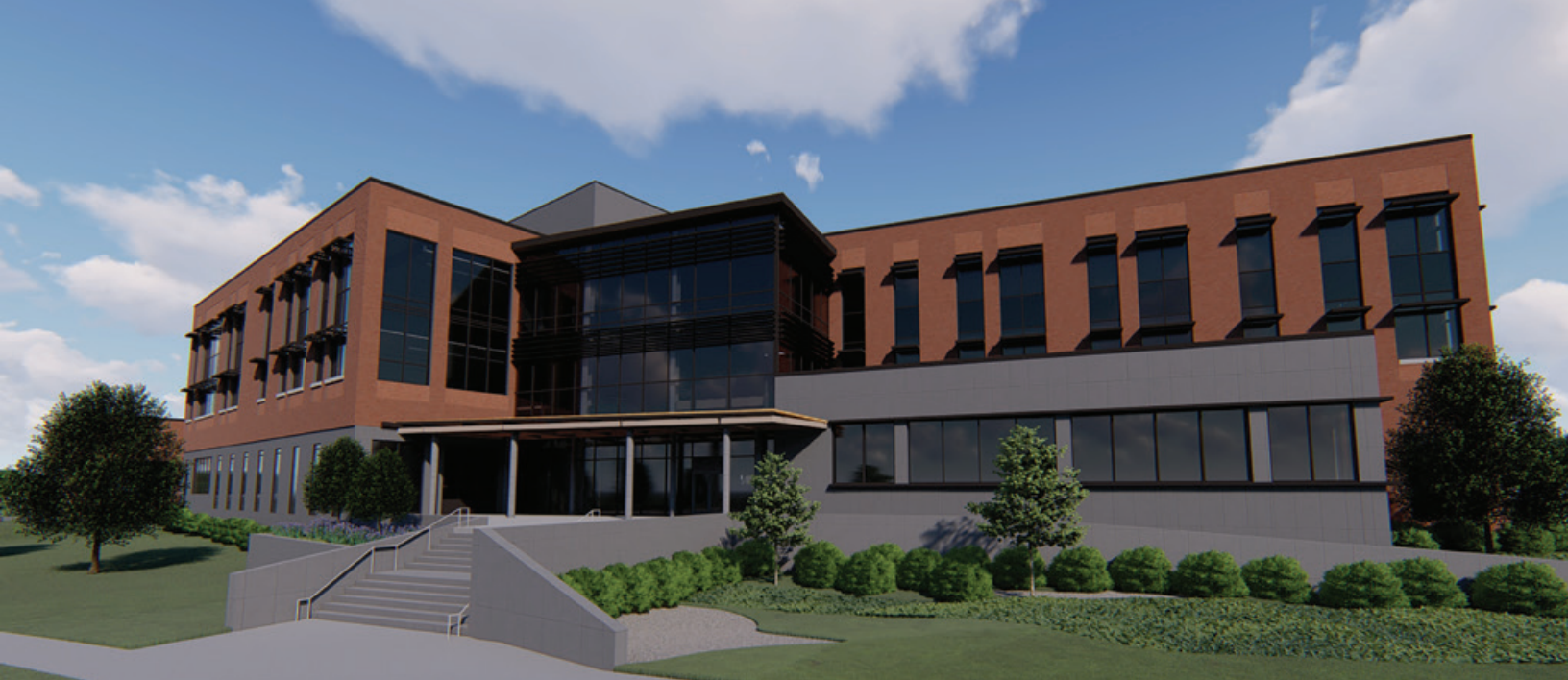
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



I AM true BLUE

0723-2291 / Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, or any other category protected by law. See our full policy at mtsu.edu/nc





APPLIED ENGINEERING BUILDING

The 89,000-square-foot Applied Engineering Building will serve as the home for the Engineering Technology and Mechatronics Engineering programs, as well as provide space for future engineering programs.

Phase 1 of the project has started.

Total project cost is \$74.8 million, including cost for the building, demolition of Voorhies, infrastructure, site improvements, and surrounding pedestrian and vehicular circulation.

KOM AND RUTLEDGE HALL RENOVATION

Design has started for this project and will continue through 2023, with construction set to begin in summer 2024. Anecdote Architectural Experiences is the designer of record.

Total project cost is at \$54.3 million, including cost for demolition of the E.W. Midgett building, renovations to both Kirksey Old Main and Rutledge Hall, infrastructure, site improvements, and pedestrian and vehicular parking.

Rutledge will be converted from a residential hall into an office/classroom building to house University College/ University Studies. KOM will house Mathematical Sciences, Computer Science, and Data Science.

Renovations to both structures will include major renovations of HVAC, plumbing, data/IT, and electrical systems; replanning of building layouts to accommodate future use; accessibility improvements; window replacement; roofing; and other exterior building improvements. Small additions are envisioned on both buildings to allow for new entries and vertical circulation.

The Applied Engineering Building will be a companion piece to the School of Concrete and Construction Management Building.

HFR Inc. (Nashville) and Cooper Carry (Atlanta) are the designers, and Denark Construction Inc. is the contractor for this project.

Construction will be completed in summer 2025.



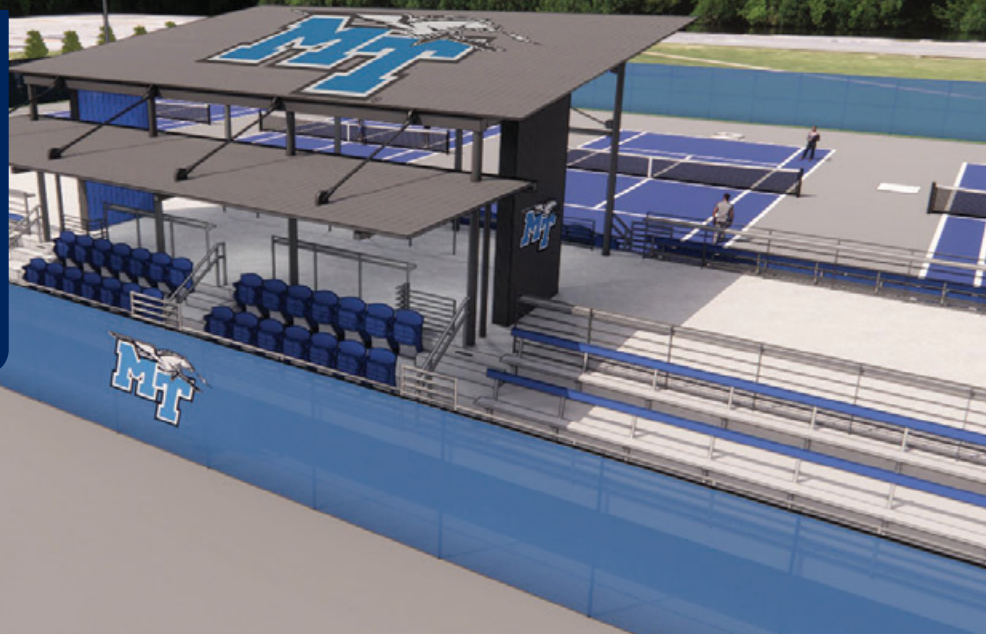
Kirksey Old Main Building



Rutledge Hall

TENNIS

Construction is underway on our new outdoor tennis facility on campus. The new construction includes eight tennis courts, spectator seating, site improvements, and a small support building with restrooms, storage, locker rooms, and coaches' offices.



STUDENT-ATHLETE PERFORMANCE CENTER

This project is the primary component of development to the northwest corner of the MTSU campus envisioned in the MTSU Athletics Master Plan.

The Student-Athlete Performance Center (75,500 square feet) will include training spaces, strength and conditioning rooms, locker rooms, meeting space, and offices to serve MTSU Athletics and student-athletes.

Total project cost is \$66 million, which includes demolition of upper-deck seating in Floyd Stadium so the new center can be physically connected to and overlook the stadium. A small section of outdoor loge seating will be added to the north end of Floyd Stadium.

Phase 1 of construction has started. The Parent Company is the contractor, with Goodwyn Mills Cawood being the designer of record.

Locally owned SRM Concrete recently donated \$3 million to MTSU's Build Blue campaign, the third-largest gift in Athletics history. Formerly known as Smyrna Ready Mix,

CAPITAL MAINTENANCE

We were awarded a large capital maintenance project—Central Plant and Campus Utilities Updates—and are currently reviewing design firms to complete this work.



the family-owned and -operated ready mix company was founded by Melissa and Mike Hollingshead in 1999. It provides ready mix concrete and construction materials to customers throughout 19 states.

This project will repair, replace, and update centralized and decentralized cooling and heating plant systems, including underground campus utilities.



MTSU followed up a record year of fundraising a year ago with growing donor support in 2022–23, **securing a new record of just over \$18.2 million in private donations to support the University’s educational mission.**

The total to close out the fiscal year June 30 was an increase of \$1 million from the previous year, a feat made more impressive by the economic uncertainties surrounding inflationary worries throughout the past year.

In addition to the \$18.2 million in “real dollars” donated this past year, another \$16.5 million was pledged in longer-term gifts through such methods as wills and estate planning (plus another \$1.5 million worth of nondeductible gifts from private industry for use of software or technology access).

I continue to be amazed and greatly appreciative of the continued financial support for our institution from our thousands of alumni around the world, our host of community and industry partners, and the many friends of the University who value our contributions to this great community. They epitomize what it means to be True Blue, and their generosity is critical to the success of the generations of Blue Raider scholars to come.

As state funds have tightened over the years, private donor support for public higher education institutions has grown exponentially. As but one example, the state now requires matching funds for new building construction.

The fact that we’ve seen two back-to-back record-breaking years says a lot about how our alumni perceive this institution, and what they see is the value that we’re providing to our students and to the community at large.

No gift to the University is too small. Every gift is important. Every gift has value. Potential donors to MTSU are encouraged to find an aspect of the University that they’re passionate about and direct their dollars there.

[PLEASE GO TO MTSU.EDU/GIVE.](https://mtsu.edu/give)

Our Information Technology Division (ITD) works tirelessly to provide students, faculty, and staff the resources needed to deliver and receive instruction and to do our jobs on a day-to-day basis. Here are some recent highlights:

- The ITD Classroom and Technology team has been showcased by vendors for their leading-edge audiovisual classroom upgrades.
- BLUEWIFI is now available in all academic and administrative buildings, and HOUSINGBLUEWIFI is now available in all Housing and Residential Life buildings. In addition, an extensive upgrade to the wired network in Housing and Residential Life buildings this summer brings critical improvements that modernize the campus network and position it for future growth.
- The MTSU website is being redesigned for this fall, along with reworking over 300 academic program pages. This effort is a collaborative effort between ITD and Marketing and Communications with input and feedback from several areas on campus, including Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management.
- Our enterprise digital media management solution, using MerlinX software, will be available this fall, providing access to digital assets from our partners: the Division of Marketing and Communications, MT Athletics, the James E. Walker Library, and the Albert Gore Research Center.
- The Center for Technologies and Training and the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center offered more than 80 workshops last year.
- James Copeland, Director of Classroom Technology, and his team recently received the Gold award from the Higher Ed AV conference for the MTSU classroom upgrade project. Three vendors have also showcased MTSU’s audiovisual classrooms as leading-edge implementation examples.
- One of our talented instructional designers, Jennifer Ponder, will be presenting at the American Association of State Colleges and Universities this summer on the possible use of artificial intelligence in higher education. Look for upcoming presentations on the topic this fall as well.
- We implemented Splunk for system monitoring, troubleshooting, and proactive issue identification across all platforms.

STUDENT LIFE

Research tells us that the first six weeks of the semester are critically important in setting up the conditions for student success. Students need to connect academically in the classroom, but they also need to connect socially through out-of-the classroom activities. Our goal is to help all new students to develop a sense of belonging and connection to the MTSU campus.

During the 16 **CUSTOMS** freshman orientation sessions this summer, Division of Student Affairs staff talked with students about the Connection Point program and the importance of attending at least four Connection Point events during their first semester on campus.

Connection Point is the connecting theme for a variety of welcome activities for our newest students. In addition to meeting new people and having a great time, students receive a collectible button designed especially for each event. Students need to download an electronic event pass and bring their mobile devices with them to the activities/events so Student Affairs staff can record their attendance. This will allow the staff to monitor our students' involvement to ensure they are connecting with our community. Students who are not connecting with the MTSU community at events will be contacted by the staff to determine how we can help them become more involved.

Connection Point activities for the fall semester began Aug. 24 with the Move-In Movie under the stars on the Student Union Commons.

The **Welcome Back Bash** took place Aug. 25 on the Union Commons. The summer reading author, Bruce Feiler, was available to sign copies of his book, and students mingled with student organizations and the Fraternity and Sorority Life community.

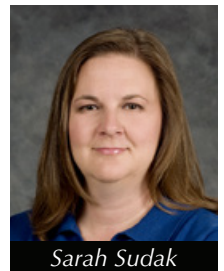
Aug. 26 marked **MTSU's 22nd University Convocation**. This year's summer reading selection was *Life Is in the Transitions: Mastering Change at Any Age*. The book is a collection of stories from Feiler's timely travels cross-country where he encountered people who had experienced recent major life changes.

Learn more about future Connection Point activities at mtsu.edu/connection

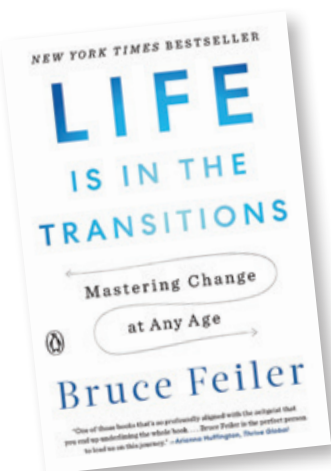
And don't forget that **Family Weekend** is scheduled for Sept. 15–16. The Blue Raider football team will host Murray State University for the home opener at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16. The annual Freshman Walk will take place at halftime.

Dining Update: Slim & Husky's is new to the Middle @ Corlew (replacing Pizza Hut). Just Love is new to the Union food court (replacing Dunkin'). Nashville Chicken & Waffles, which had a successful run as a Restaurant Rotation option, will replace Steak 'n Shake. Blendz Bowls, which had a successful run as another Restaurant Rotation option, will take over the Restaurant Rotation location permanently. In addition, Starbucks in the Library has had a complete facelift this summer.

In other news, **Sarah Sudak**, previously associate vice president for student affairs and dean of students, has agreed to delay her retirement and assume the role of interim vice president for student affairs and dean of students until a new appointee is selected and begins. It is my hope that we can conclude the new search no later than the end of the 2023–24 academic year.



Sarah Sudak



connection point



Each of the colleges and academic units at MTSU maintains a high level of activity and produces news worth crowing about. Here are just a few examples of the remarkable work we have recently performed on the campus of MTSU.

CAMPUSWIDE

New Appointments:

Neporcha Cone joins MTSU as dean of the College of Education.

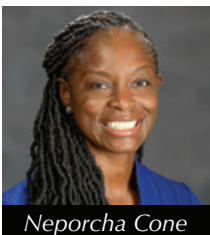
Joyce T. Heames is the new dean of the Jones College of Business.

Michael Hein became interim dean of the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

Laurie Witherow became the interim vice provost for enrollment services on July 1, reporting directly to Provost Mark Byrnes. (This brings Undergraduate Recruitment, MT One Stop, Financial Aid and Scholarships, New Student and Family Programs, Enrollment Technical Services, and the Charlie Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center under the Division of Academic Affairs.)

Thomas Nicholas is the new director of the School of Concrete and Construction Management. He comes from University of North Carolina–Charlotte, where he was an associate professor and interim chair of the Engineering Technology and Construction Management Department.

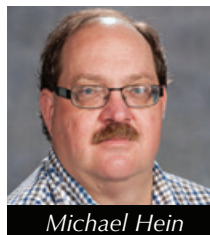
The Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia welcomed **Karen Kehoe** as the new director of Dyslexia Services. Kehoe has a doctorate in Educational Psychology from the University of Virginia and an Ed.M. from Harvard University Graduate School of Education, where she focused on language and literacy.



Neporcha Cone



Joyce T. Heames



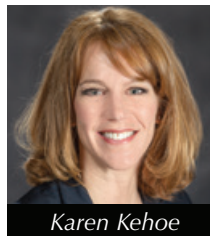
Michael Hein



Laurie Witherow



Thomas Nicholas



Karen Kehoe



New Academic Programs:

Due to consistent enrollment, two concentrations previously offered by the **Criminal Justice Administration Department** are being elevated to independent majors. Beginning this fall, the department will offer bachelor's degree programs in **Emergency Management and Homeland Security (EMHS)** and **Law Enforcement**, in addition to Criminal Justice. EMHS students will receive unique preparation for state- and federal-level service in the quickly expanding field of emergency and disaster management. And the new degree in Law Enforcement will train students in modern criminal investigation techniques and police management strategies.

The new dual graduate degree in **Library Science and Social Work (M.L.S./M.S.W.)** provides students an opportunity to serve their respective future communities more fully not only as information facilitators, but also as confidential and targeted referral sources to local, state, or national social services. The combined degree is the only program of this type in the region and among only a small number in the nation.

We recently celebrated more than **830 new alumni** as they crossed the Murphy Center stage to receive their degrees during the summer 2023 Commencement on Aug. 12. Of the 834 graduates, 559 were undergraduates and 275 were graduate students. The graduate student group included 245 master's candidates, 13 education specialist recipients, and 17 doctoral candidates. Five graduate students received graduate certificates.

COLLEGE OF BASIC AND APPLIED SCIENCES

The first graduating Medical School Early Acceptance Program students—**Claire Ritter**, **Maria Hite**, **Pierce Creighton**, and **Kirolos Michael**—received their MTSU degrees in May.

These four students began their studies at MTSU in fall 2019 and have already completed their first year in the M.D. program at Meharry Medical College in Nashville.

MTSU's highly touted **Department of Aerospace** joined **Southwest Airlines' Destination 225°** program in April, becoming one of the newest partners in the airline's unique first officer development and recruitment program. Destination 225° builds pathways for aspiring pilots from university aviation programs across the country to first officer roles at Southwest Airlines.



For the first time in school history, MTSU's equestrian team took home the Western National Championship trophy at the 2023 Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association National Championship, edging the competition by a single point. MTSU's award-winning stock horse team, defending its national championship from 2022, finished its season in second place (reserve national champion).



Janna Abou-Rahma, an undergraduate student and researcher from MTSU, and her team won the highly competitive Mayo Clinic Social Determinants of Health Challenge.

(Photo courtesy of Janna Abou-Rahma)



Ariel Nicastro, a Physics major and Honors College student, was selected from about 200 applicants to participate in the 2023 Training and Research Experiences in Nonlinear Dynamics (TREND) summer research program, also known as a research experience for undergraduates (REU).

The Big Machine Music City Grand Prix again partnered with MTSU's **Concrete Industry Management** program on the development of the race's barricade system.

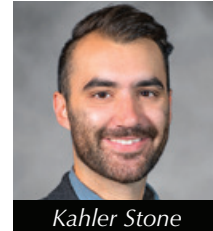


COLLEGE OF BEHAVIORAL AND HEALTH SCIENCES

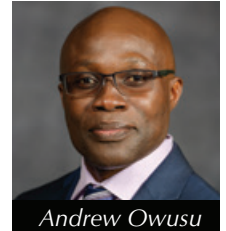
MTSU's **School of Nursing** was recognized by the 2023–24 Colleges of Distinction list as one of the Best Colleges of Nursing. Its NCLEX first-time pass rate of 96% was above the state average of 86% and the national average of 80% for 2022.



Kahler Stone and **Andrew Owusu**, faculty members in Community and Public Health, were awarded a \$124,000 grant from the Tennessee Department of Health to conduct a national health care safety network data validation.



Kahler Stone



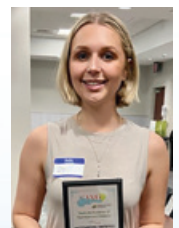
Andrew Owusu

Danielle Lauber, faculty member in the Leisure and Sport Management program, collaborated with staff from the Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Department, faculty and students from the College of Media and Entertainment, and MT Imagine Animation Studio to create a virtual reality simulation of the David Price Miracle Field. This one-of-a-kind simulation will allow students to virtually experience the design and impact of inclusive recreation programming for residents of Murfreesboro who have a disability.



Danielle Lauber

Logan Dowd, a junior in Dietetics, won the 2023 Nashville Association of Nutrition and Dietetics Outstanding Dietetics Student Award.



JONES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

New rankings for the college include:

- Top Business Colleges of Distinction of 2023–24
- Best Tennessee MBA Schools and Programs #3 rank (2023)
- Best Master's Programs in Supply Chain Management #2 rank (2023)

Sam Zaza, associate professor in the Department of Information Systems and Analytics, received a prestigious Greater Nashville Technology Council Award as Diversity and Inclusion Advocate of the Year.



Ibtissam Zaza



The Jones College of Business was proud to be a presenting sponsor of the 2023 *Nashville Business Journal* 40 Under 40 Awards, which recognize young successful professionals in the greater Nashville area. Three MTSU alumni—**Joshua Black**, **April Harrington**, and **Tiffany Childress**—were 2023 award recipients!

An MTSU student team took first place

at the Association for Information Systems (AIS) PayCargo Supply Chain Logistics Case Study Competition held at Florida International University in Miami this April. Students on the team were Lebogang Mosito, Jonathan Dunn, Priscilla Hammermeister, and Cayson Seipel. Faculty support came from Michael Erskine, Melinda Korzaan, and Richard Tarpey.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION



Along with having nine presentations accepted for 2023 national conferences, **faculty and students in the Assessment, Learning, and Student Success** doctoral program collaborated with members of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED) Consortium to publish two articles in flagship journals.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity

MTSU's **Center for Fairness, Justice, and Equity** (FJE) received a grant from the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) to support the hiring of a recruitment and engagement specialist for the MTSU Teach Back Initiative. This initiative, developed by FJE, aims to recruit high school seniors from rural and underserved communities in Tennessee to earn an initial teaching license at MTSU. After completing coursework, students will then return to their sponsoring districts to begin teaching careers.

The **Center for Educational Media** produced 19 professional development videos for PK–12 educators, engaged with 789 work-based professionals supporting education through state government and community agencies, and partnered with College of Education departments and centers to produce and deliver professional development opportunities for educators.



The **Department of Elementary and Special Education** was one of only 48 departments at universities in America to receive a grade of A+ in Reading Foundations from the National Center for Teacher Quality.



This past spring, more than 2,200 public school teachers completed online training in foundational literacy skills screening and instruction developed by the team at MTSU's **Tennessee Center for Dyslexia**.



This training, which was part of a larger project funded by a contract with the Ohio Department of Education, will help educators identify the risk of reading and spelling problems early and intervene to provide timely instruction and intervention.

Early learning programs received additional funding support from agencies such as the Department of Human Services and the American Rescue Plan. The **Child Development Center** and the **Ann Campbell Early Learning Center** received \$33,900 and \$148,678, respectively, to support program needs. The MTSU Home and Community-Based Early Intervention Program received a two-year funding increase of \$2,036,760 to provide home-based services to children up to age 4.



Tiffany Wilson

The Tennessee Department of Education recently named **Tiffany Wilson**, School Counseling coordinator for MTSU's College of Education, as the school counseling consultant for its just under \$14 million grant project to retain and recruit mental health professionals into high-needs, rural school districts across the state.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

CLA had two of the 10 Harold Love Outstanding Community Service Award winners for 2023—Associate Professor **Jim Chaney** (Global Studies and Human Geography) and **Dimend Little** (International Relations).



Deborah Sickler-Voigt

Debrah Sickler-Voigt was honored as the National Art Education Association's 2023 Southeastern Region Higher Education Art Educator of the Year and the Tennessee Art Education Association's 2023 Higher Education Art Educator of the Year.

COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS *Cont.*



Political Science major and Honors College freshman **Victoria Grigsby** was selected as a Fulbright UK Summer Institute fellow. Hosted by Aberystwyth University in Wales, the Summer Institute is a three-week cultural and academic program focusing on the theme Identity and Nationhood through

the lens of Wales at a critical juncture in the politics of Wales, the United Kingdom, and wider Europe.

COLLEGE OF MEDIA AND ENTERTAINMENT

MTSU students staffed cameras, ran video packages, produced audio for both a broadcast and public address system, built a stage, and more for a special NTT IndyCar Series/Big Machine Music City Grand Prix event on lower Broadway in downtown Nashville this August. Along with MTSU's **True Blue TV**



Event Productions and as part of a production team, nearly 20 Media Arts Productions students, recent graduates, and Media Arts engineering staff spent 12 hours dodging rain Aug. 3 while preparing, filming, and taking down equipment used to capture a news conference atop Nashville Underground.



A team of around 50 Recording Industry, Media Arts, and Journalism students helped produce content at this year's **Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival** under the guidance of MTSU faculty and staff. The Live Production and Audio Production students worked on 25 performances that aired on the streaming service Hulu, which constituted 35% of the concerts at this year's Bonnaroo. Students also wrote and filed daily stories and photos for *Sidelines*, MTSU's Seigenthaler News Service, and the MTSU Student Voice, while photography students captured visual stories of the festival.

In February, six CME students flew to Los Angeles for **Grammy** weekend, where they met with industry professionals and alumni and worked as volunteers for the Grammys' MusiCares benefit. I joined



students and faculty on the red carpet at Friday's exclusive MusiCares event honoring Motown founder Berry Gordy and Grammy-winning musical giant Smokey Robinson. The number of MTSU-connected Grammy winners since 2001 currently stands at 15 people with a total of 39 Grammys, including 10 repeat recipients, in categories from classical to pop to rock to country to gospel.



In early June, Media Arts' Animation program and International Affairs co-hosted the fourth annual **Wonderful World International Student Media Art Festival**.

Universities from around the world came to MTSU to create live action and animated films based on issues that affect humanity on a global scale. MTSU's submission, an animated comedic horror film on recycling called *Reduce, Reuse, Run!*, was created by Animation students Sydney Davis, Steve Granados Lopez, Carter Holland, Elvis Hurtado, Josh Mahan, and Kayla Stout. The film won Best Technology Innovation, Best Comedy, and Best Animated Film. The conference was led by Professor Guanping Zheng, director for the Center for Asian Studies, and Media Arts Associate Professor Kevin McNulty.



The **School of Journalism and Strategic Media** is offering three new concentrations for students starting this fall: Entertainment Journalism, Environmental Journalism and Communication, and Social Justice Journalism.

The **College of Media and Entertainment** hosted its inaugural Newest Superstar recruitment event Jan. 21.

More than 40 admitted students and their families dropped by the Chris Young Café—driving in from places like Maryland and South Carolina just for the party. CME faculty, current students, and staff were on hand to speak with admitted students and their families.

The college also featured Commercial Songwriting student performances. Admitted students were encouraged to exchange contact information with each other and to reach out to faculty if they needed any guidance in transitioning to college life in the fall.



HONORS COLLEGE

2023–24 year marks the 50th anniversary of Honors at MTSU!

Mary Evins, research professor in the University Honors College and Department of History, was named recipient of the Barbara Burch Award for Faculty Leadership in Civic Engagement from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities for student voter registration efforts. Evins is director of MTSU's chapter of the American Democracy Project.



Honors student **Elizabeth Kowalczyk** (Forensic Science) was recently named as a 2023 Goldwater Scholar. She is one of only eight students from Tennessee institutions to receive the award this year. The prestigious Goldwater Scholarship is the premier undergraduate scholarship in mathematics, natural sciences, and engineering in the United States. It's the fourth consecutive year that MTSU has had an undergraduate student winner of the Goldwater Award for students in the sciences.



Political Science major **Victoria Grigsby** received one of the most competitive overseas fellowships in the country — the Fulbright Summer Institute in Wales in the United Kingdom. The purpose of the Fulbright is to increase understanding between U.S. citizens and those from other countries through the exchange of people, knowledge, and skills. The grants are designed to give U.S. students the opportunity to live and study in a foreign country. More than 25 MTSU students have received Fulbright awards since 2008.



TREND REU Physics major **Ariel Nicastro** was selected from about 200 applicants to participate in the 2023 Training and Research Experiences in Nonlinear Dynamics (TREND), a 10-week undergraduate summer research program in nonlinear dynamics at the University of Maryland funded by the National Science Foundation.

MTSU sent multiple undergrads to prestigious research placements across the U.S. A record number of students earned **Research Experiences for Undergraduates** (REU) fellowships, including one who had just completed her freshman year.



Three MTSU students were among 80 undergraduate and graduate students nationwide selected for the U.S. Department of State's Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) **Spark Award** program for summer 2023.



WALKER LIBRARY

In January, Walker Library launched **MT Open Press** with its first book, *Privacy and Safety in Online Learning*, edited by two faculty librarians, Denise Quintel and Amy York. The book explores how educators managed the privacy, security, and safety concerns of remote learning in 2020 through essays, case studies, and pedagogical approaches. Digital Scholarship Initiatives is managing all aspects of MT Open Press and is currently working on a second publication. Everything published by MT Open Press is open access and available for free online. You can learn more about Open Press at openpress.mtsu.edu



Ginelle Baskin was hired as the new open education and student success librarian. She now leads Walker Library's student success initiatives, including the development and oversight of the campus' open educational resources program. Previously, she served as a lecturer in the User Services Department, where she provided reference and instruction support and served as the liaison to the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures.

ITD replaced 100 Dell computers and 20 Mac computers this summer for the library. Library technology staff have been busy placing the new computers throughout the open computing spaces in the library. I know that MTSU students will be excited to see new technology throughout the building.



GPO For the past three years, **Special Collections** in Walker Library has been building a new, relevant collection focused on the history of Distilling, Fermenting, and Brewing in Tennessee. As a result of this work, Alan Boehm, Susan Martin, Susan Hanson, Beverly Geckle, and Toni Butler-Click worked collectively on a proposal to the Government Publishing Office (GPO) to become a **Preservation Steward**. The status was awarded in May.

In the past, Walker Library has **partnered with performing arts faculty** to feature various performances in the Atrium. For instance, on April 12, Walker Library welcomed the MTSU Harp Studio, under the direction of Sarah K. Crocker. Students Kaelan Allen, Claire Cifonie, and Alana Greene performed a mini-concert. It was a beautiful and relaxing way to head into the end of the semester.



INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENT

Our International Affairs Office, led by Robert Summers and with assistance from Rubie Ghazal, recently signed a memorandum of understanding with Dubai Police. A delegation of 15 participants visited MTSU from July 23 to Aug. 11, attending seminars, visiting partners in Nashville, and attending cultural and professional events.

One of our visitors was a sheikh (a royal prince!), three were related to the royal family, and one is the son of prominent government official. It is very uncommon to have members of a royal family on a college campus in America. We were very excited for this opportunity and look forward to similar efforts in the future.

The International Affairs Office provides strong leadership for one of my chief priorities—the comprehensive internationalization of MTSU by fostering growth and development of our international programs and services. MTSU has strengthened our international initiatives both on campus and around the world. Those efforts boost student success through creating opportunities for travel, exposure to culture, and research.

Here are some other recent highlights:

Education Abroad: MTSU had another increase in study abroad participation. During the last academic year, we sent 281 students overseas. Twenty-eight MTSU faculty-led programs took 236 students to 25 countries. Six MTSU students were awarded the esteemed Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship to study abroad. Moreover, we have offered a record level of scholarships and funding, more than \$600,000 in 2022–23 alone. On average, each student received over \$2,000 to support their work abroad.

International Recruitment: For fall 2022, MTSU had approximately 359 undergraduates and another 203 graduate students enrolled from over 73 different countries. The pandemic slowed the growth in the number of students studying in the U.S. MTSU, like universities across the country, faced decreasing student numbers. Through supportive leadership, active engagement, and a focus on international recruitment, MTSU has turned the decrease around and now boasts increasing international student numbers. We anticipate a significant increase in the number of international students on campus for fall 2023.

International Student Programming: We strive to make MTSU a welcoming, safe place for international students and visitors. We do so by offering various programming to encourage student involvement in campus activities, enhance cultural experiences, and help academic success. Activities include student success workshops, cultural excursions to national parks, and international seminars and presentations. For example, this past year we celebrated the Holi Festival, went hiking in local state parks, took a tour of Nashville, and hosted an iftar meal during Ramadan.

Impact of International Students: Aside from the academic and social benefits of increasing the presence of international students on our campus, there is also an economic benefit to the MTSU community. International students studying at U.S. colleges and universities contributed \$33.8 billion to our national economy and supported more than 335,423 jobs in the 2021–22 academic year, according to NAFSA. Tennessee attracted 7,270 international students who contributed \$260 million to the state economy and supported 2,800 jobs.



With more than two decades of delivering high-quality distance education, MTSU Online supports our faculty and serves students through the creation, design, and delivery of effective and engaging online and blended learning environments.

MTSU Online continues to grow. Enrollment in online courses is at an all-time high, with more than 2,800 completely online students and more than 7,500 partially online students. More than 13% of MTSU's enrollment is composed of students who are enrolled exclusively in online courses. More than one-half of all MTSU students took at least one online course during this past year.

Over the past two years, we have increased from 16 to 38 completely online degree programs. Our goal is to ensure MTSU is ready and available to provide an education for every student who is seeking to learn, regardless of their geographic location.

This past year, MTSU Online funded 28 full-time temporary instructors for 19 departments across the University. These instructors are trained in online teaching and give significant help to departments who are serving online students.

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

We support faculty through a range of services including course design help, faculty training workshops, individual consultations, and extensive web-based resources.

Our instructional designers (IDs) are key resources for faculty as they develop and deliver engaging learning environments. This year our IDs helped design 88 new online courses and redesign an additional 65 courses.

MTSU NOW HAS A PORTFOLIO OF MORE THAN 750 WELL-DESIGNED ONLINE COURSES TO CONTRIBUTE TO STUDENT ACCESS AND SUCCESS.

MTSU  **Online**

I am pleased to report that we are hiring a fourth instructional designer to increase faculty support services.

MTSU Online is a key contributor to the Quest 2025 initiative—specifically the mandate to increase online, hybrid, and off-site program offerings and to increase curricular flexibility. Online is a key strategic initiative for MTSU, as we strive to bring the resources of MTSU to the residents of Tennessee and beyond.

For 2023 MTSU was recognized for the second consecutive year by *Newsweek* as one of its Top Online Colleges.

GRADUATE AND RESEARCH UPDATE

Over the past decade, MTSU has aggressively transitioned from a primarily undergraduate institution to a doctoral research university with significant research activity. Here are some recent highlights.

Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP)

- Rachel McGinnis was hired as new director of the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.
- ORSP assisted in 113 undergraduate research and creative activity projects, which led to student presentations both nationally and internationally.
- ORSP assisted faculty in 108 proposal submissions—a 10% increase from last year.
- MTSU faculty received \$12,155,489 in awards for research and service projects across campus.

College of Graduate Studies (CGS)

- Graduate Studies welcomed Amy Harris as the interim associate dean after Dawn McCormack's departure to become the dean of Arts and Sciences at Samford University. Harris has been on faculty since 2007 in the Department of Information Systems and Analytics and an active member of graduate faculty.
- CGS launched a new dual-degree graduate program allowing students to concurrently earn master's degrees in Library Science and Social Work.
- Graduate Studies launched a new concentration in History Education as part of the M.A. in History.

I am always proud to say that Blue Raiders excel in the classroom. Here is the latest proof:



In spring 2023:

- 201 of 326 (62%) of all student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher grade point average.
- 137 (42%) of all student-athletes made the Dean's List by earning a 3.5 or higher GPA.
- 44 (13%) of all student-athletes had a perfect 4.0 GPA.
- 13 of 15 teams had a 3.0 or higher semester GPA.
- Highest men's team GPA: golf, 3.42
- Highest women's team GPA: golf, 3.75
- Semester GPA for all student-athletes: 3.106
- Cumulative GPA for all student-athletes: 3.142

Now, here are some spring highlights from outside the classroom!

MTSU IN TOP 100 OF DIRECTORS' CUP; FIRST IN C-USA

MTSU capped off another outstanding academic and athletic year, placing 96th out of 363 Division I schools in the 2022–23 Learfield Sports Directors' Cup. The Blue Raiders' 180.25 total points also led all Conference USA members.



In 10 complete years in C-USA, MTSU has finished as the top team four times, which is more than any other program in the league during that span. The 2019–20 season was not scored due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so it works out to four wins in nine scored years.

It marked the fifth time in the last eight years the Blue Raiders have finished in the top 100 and the seventh time in school history.



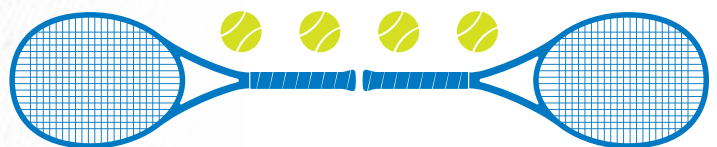
MALASHKA SELECTED IN WNBA DRAFT

Kseniya Malashka was a third-round pick of the Chicago Sky in the 2023 WNBA draft on April 10, becoming the fifth player in program history to earn a spot in the WNBA draft.

Malashka averaged 15.1 points per game and 5.8 rebounds per game in 2022–23. Playing in a role that brought her off the bench through the season, she earned her Conference USA Sixth Player of the Year for the second straight year.

MEN'S TENNIS TAKES FOURTH STRAIGHT C-USA TITLE

The No. 27 nationally ranked MTSU men's tennis team captured its fourth-straight Conference USA title April 23 by defeating No. 41 UTSA 4-0 in Houston. With the victory, the Blue Raiders earned C-USA's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament.





WHITSON, MEAD, FERGUSON WIN TOP RCA AWARDS

Basketball's **Courtney Whitson**, softball's **Gretchen Mead**, and football's **Jordan Ferguson** were the big winners at the 12th Annual Raiders' Choice Awards on April 27. The year-end Academy Awards-style show at Tucker Theatre highlighted all the academic and athletic accomplishments of the Blue Raider student-athletes for the 2022–23 academic year.

Whitson, Mead, and Ferguson were honored with the True Blue President's Award, which is the highest honor bestowed upon a current MT student-athlete who epitomizes all that is good in intercollegiate athletics and recognizes both outstanding academic and athletic accomplishments, University/community service, and leadership.



BLUE RAIDERS CHOSEN IN MLB DRAFT

MTSU junior **Eriq Swan** was taken No. 137 overall by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the fourth round of the 2023 Major League Baseball draft this spring. Swan finished the 2023 season 2-6 with a 6.49 ERA, a 1.69 WHIP (walks and hits per inning pitched), and 71 strikeouts (second on the team) in 61 innings over 16 appearances (12 starts).

Junior **Jaden Hamm** was selected by the Detroit Tigers in the fifth round (No. 143 overall). In 2023, Hamm led the Blue Raiders in starts (14), innings pitched (79.2), and strikeouts (93). He was named to the Conference USA first team.



STAMPER NAMED C-USA GOLFER OF THE YEAR

Five Blue Raiders were among the honorees in the Conference USA men's golf all-conference awards. **Owen Stamper** was honored as the 2023 C-USA Golfer of the Year and was named to the all-conference first team. **Michael Barnard** picked up all-conference recognition on the second team, while **Kevin Jegers** was named to the third team. **Markus Varjun** earned Freshman of the Year and all-freshman team honors; **Carter Maneth** also was named to the all-freshman team. Stamper is MTSU's second C-USA Golfer of the Year and the 11th conference Player of the Year in program history. He also earned the first all-conference recognition of his career.



SOFTBALL SECURES BEST SEASON IN HISTORY

MTSU softball secured the **second Conference USA title in program history** with a 3-2 win over North Texas on May 13. In the NCAA Tuscaloosa Regional the Blue Raiders forced a decisive Game 7 by defeating No. 5 Alabama 4-1 in Game 6.

However, a seventh-inning home run pushed the Crimson Tide past MTSU 1-0 in the decisive second game of the day May 21. The Raiders (42-20) still recorded the best record in program history and the program's best-ever postseason finish, placing among the Top 32 teams in the NCAA Tournament after advancing to the regional finals.



FAST BREAK SENDS BASKETBALL PAST NO. 25 FAU

Men's basketball defeated No. 25 Florida Atlantic 74-70 on Feb. 16 in MTSU's first win over a ranked opponent since the Blue Raiders' first-round win over No. 2-seeded

Michigan State in the 2016 NCAA Tournament. The Owls did not lose again until they reached the NCAA Final Four.



NO. 25 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL BACK IN NCAA TOURNEY

MTSU's No. 25-ranked women's basketball team won the 2023 Conference USA Tournament on March 11, doubling up Western Kentucky in the second quarter to win 82-70.

Jalynn Gregory was named tournament MVP after scoring a team-leading 24 points. In her final C-USA Tournament game, Alexis Whittington scored 16 points while hauling in six rebounds. Kseniya Malashka was MTSU's other all-tournament team honoree, scoring 14 points.

NATIONAL HONORS FOR WHEELER, MATT INSELL

Junior Savannah Wheeler was named a Mid-Major Honorable Mention All-America selection and associate women's basketball head coach Matt Insell was named the National Mid-Major Assistant Coach of the Year by World Exposure Report.

In her inaugural season in an MTSU uniform, Wheeler averaged a team-best 15.1 points per game and started all 30 games she appeared in. She was chosen to the all-conference first team and was a three-time Conference USA Player of the Week winner.

Insell has helped the Lady Raiders post a 116-41 record in his five seasons as an assistant coach at MTSU, including the 2022-23 season when he was elevated to associate head coach. Over the last two seasons, he has helped the team win 55 games, a new program record for a two-year period.



FINAL THOUGHTS ON 2022-23

- MTSU won four Conference USA championships—women's basketball (regular and postseason), men's tennis, and softball—and four teams competed in the NCAA Tournament (women's basketball, men's golf, men's tennis, and softball). Seven of our teams reached postseason play.
- Men's tennis, women's basketball, and softball all were ranked in the Top 25 this year.
- Softball finished the season ranked No. 23 in the nation by *Softball America*.
- The Blue Raiders this year beat a school record of nine teams who were ranked in the Top 25 in six sports—football, men's basketball, women's basketball, men's tennis, softball, and baseball.
- Track standouts Alaba Akintola and Esther Isa both advanced to the NCAA Championships. Akintola made the indoor and outdoor championships, while Isa competed in the indoor nationals.



INQUIRE
LEARN
ENGAGE
THRIVE

QUEST
2025

Work continues on Quest 2025, a part of our strategic plan that stems from 2013 designed to improve retention and graduation rates.

The results of these efforts are clearly reflected in recent outcome measures. The retention rates for first-time freshmen have grown from 68.5% in fall 2012 to 75.7% in fall 2022—a significant increase. Six-year graduation rates have increased from 50.2% to 59.2%. These are significant and sustained achievements that reflect the exceptional work of everyone on campus!

The work to operationalize goals set out in Quest 2025 are divided out into five strategic priority work groups. Over the past academic year each of the five work groups completed significant tasks to continue to advance MTSU's student success work. There are more than 60 faculty and staff serving on these workgroups. The contributions of our colleagues are key ingredients of a successful student success program.

For a succinct overview of Quest 2025 achievements, please see the slide deck from the May 3, 2023, campus forum at mtsu.edu/quest/docs/forum2023.pdf

If you are interested in serving on one of the Quest 2025 work groups, please contact Rick Sluder.

Quest 2025 Strategic Priority Work Groups

Strategic Priority No. 1:

Invest in a comprehensive faculty development program that includes the integration of high impact practices in key curricula. (Leah Lyons, Greg Van Patten)

Strategic Priority No. 2:

Eliminate achievement gaps by using analytics, refining and expanding student support programs, and increasing faculty diversity. (Eric Oslund, one vacancy)

Strategic Priority No. 3:

Increase online, hybrid, and off-site offerings; adaptive scheduling; and curricular flexibility. (Tyler Henson, Trey Martindale)

Strategic Priority No. 4:

Create a culture of service across campus. (Rick Chapman, Kathleen Schmand)

Strategic Priority No. 5:

Invest in a campuswide environment that fosters living-learning opportunities. (Bill Waits, one vacancy)

SCHOLARS ACADEMY

The Scholars Academy serves as MTSU's signature early arrival program to support underserved students. Students participate in workshops, team-building exercises, leadership training, and service-learning projects. Students who take part in Scholars Academy have higher rates of success, including retention and graduation, than students who do not. A total of 120 incoming first-year students participated in summer 2023 Scholars Academy.

We have two new key leaders to the Scholars Academy program. **Michelle Arnold**, manager of Scholars Academy, comes to us from Battle Ground Academy in Franklin, where she spent the last four years in senior administration as the director of inclusion and belonging and the associate director of admissions. Arnold is an MTSU alumna, and she served in various capacities for 15 years in Admissions, the Honors College, and the College of Education, Womack Educational Leadership Department.

Tiffanie Harris, assistant manager of Scholars Academy—and also an alumna—received her M.P.S. Strategic Leadership degree from Tennessee State University and is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. Harris served most recently as coordinator in the Supply Chain Management program at TSU. She earlier worked in Metro Nashville Public Schools.

TUTORING AND SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

Under the leadership of **Cornelia Wills**, director of student success, many of our MTSU students took advantage of tutoring during the 2022–23 academic year. For fall 2022, tutoring usage (6,517) significantly increased by 47% compared to the previous fall semester. There were 4,146 sessions of tutoring for the past semester, spring 2023.

Nearly 100% of students who go for tutoring pass the course for which they sought help. And of students passing the course, our most recent data show 94% of students who went for summer school tutoring, launched in 2022, enrolled in the subsequent semester.

We are making great strides in helping to eliminate the achievement gap. For spring 2023, there was an increase of 11% for Black males who attended tutoring compared to the previous spring; there was a 10% increase in Black females who attended tutoring during spring 2023 compared to spring 2022. Overall, for spring 2023, there was an increase of 10% in the total Black students who went for tutoring compared to spring 2022.

UPWARD BOUND

The Upward Bound program is a federally funded program through a TRIO grant from the U.S. Department of Education that provides fundamental support to participants in their preparation for college entrance.

A total of 21 students from Bedford County high schools—Community in Unionville and Shelbyville Central—participated in the six-week Upward Bound Summer Academy. In the first three weeks of the program, students engaged in synchronous learning via Zoom, then spent two weeks residing on campus for a college-like experience. Students participated in English and composition, math (algebra I–precalculus), science (earth and environment, chemistry, biology), and French as well as lifelong learning workshops that included Financial Literacy, Career Exploration, College 101, and Wellness Arts.

Other activities included ACT practice tests, Topgolf Nashville, Painting with a Twist Murfreesboro, and Strike and Spare Murfreesboro. The program concluded with a cultural trip to Atlanta.

ADVISING

The Advisor Mastery Program (AMP) is MTSU's in-house opportunity for professional development created and sustained by advisors. More than 40% of advisors obtained AMP certification in 2022–23, with almost all advisors participating in some professional development. Several of our outstanding advisors were recognized with awards this past year, including **Janell Fisher** in the College of Media and Entertainment, **Tiffany Fantine** in the College of Education, and **Jennifer Danylo** in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences.

ADULT DEGREE COMPLETION PROGRAM

MTSU continues to serve as a leading producer of degrees obtained by adult students in Tennessee.

To create a smooth transition for adult learners, a dedicated enrollment coordinator office has been created to assist students with navigating the complexities of the enrollment process, one of the most often reported barriers to degree completion. The services offered by this office augment the diverse recruiting efforts by streamlining entry into the degree completion process.

PARTNERSHIPS

There has been tremendous growth in the number of new MTSU corporate educational partnerships. Eight new partnerships were finalized to incentivize, facilitate, and coordinate adult higher education opportunities for employees. New partnerships include those with Ascend Federal Credit Union, Chick-fil-A Melrose, Metro Nashville Police Department, Middle Tennessee Electric, Rutherford County Sheriff's Office, Tennessee Association of Utility Districts, Taylor Farms, and Town of Smyrna. We have a total of 14 finalized education partnerships with an additional four in the pipeline.

These educational partnerships create opportunities for the companies to enhance their benefit programs for their employees as well as access to the many development opportunities offered at MTSU. Most students enrolled through these corporate partnerships would not otherwise be attending MTSU. Students benefit from very individualized services and support as well as a discounted tuition rate.

For the 2022–23 school year, 225 students were enrolled through these partnerships. There have been 22 students who have already graduated. Of the corporate students who enrolled, 67% were new to MTSU or readmitted after their company became an education partner. These types of corporate education partnerships are a strong recruitment tool for working adults.

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

MTSU's award-winning prior learning assessment (PLA) program continues to serve adult learners by helping them document and earn college credits for nontraditional learning. In keeping with evolving national standards, our PLA class has been redesigned, serving as a model for other institutions. Altogether, 1,089 students have completed the prior learning assessment process, earning an average of 24 credits during the 16-year history of the program.

DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

Since launching in fall 2015, the University College's dual enrollment program has enrolled thousands of high school students, providing them with an opportunity to earn college credit and connecting them to MTSU's campus early on.

MTSU dual enrollment students can complete a full year or more of college credits leading to a degree, at minimal cost and while finishing high school. The savings are

significant—as much as \$10,000 compared to current undergraduate tuition rates—and **a student's first four courses are tuition free**, thanks to a state grant.

In fall 2022, a total of 1,073 students were enrolled in MTSU dual enrollment courses. We expect a record number of DE students to be served this semester. Important new partnerships have been established with schools in Sumner County (Beech High School, Hendersonville High School, Merrell Hyde Magnet School), and there has been an increase in DE course requests from existing partner schools. **DE students now account for more than 6% of MTSU's total undergraduate population.**

There is more to MTSU's dual enrollment than being enrolled in courses. The hope is that by making these students part of the MTSU community they will have a sense of belonging that extends after graduation from high school.

UNIVERSITY STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Our undergraduate programs, Integrated Studies and Professional Studies, continue to lead the University in the number of conferred undergraduate degrees, and we expect that trend to continue. Our Master of Professional Studies (M.P.S.) program served 120 students in spring 2023, and enrollment is pacing to be up year over year. We are making efforts in both areas to attract new students.

As of this past spring, our B.S. in Integrated Studies was accepted as an Air University Associate to Baccalaureate Cooperative partner, which offers an avenue for military service members to easily transition their associate degrees to MTSU. Additionally, our Public Safety concentration under the leadership of the University College has been in communication with local agencies to establish a Public Safety Institute, which we hope will not only attract service members to MTSU but also establish MTSU as a leader in public safety.

For the M.P.S. program, we recently engaged in a substantial marketing campaign that produced over 800 leads.

Lastly, the department worked with Graduate Studies on the proposal of a new M.S. in Occupational Innovation and Effectiveness, an interdisciplinary focus block design, to target working professionals looking to expand their repertoire of skills in different areas. If approved, the new degree could launch as early as fall 2024.



*Charlie and Hazel Daniels
Veterans and Military Family Center*

MTSU has a long tradition of aiding veterans in their transitions from military to civilian life.

The 3,200-square-foot Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center is among the largest and most comprehensive veterans and military family centers at a university in Tennessee.

The Daniels Center provides service and support for the more than 1,100 student veterans and their family members at MTSU. Everything a student veteran needs to succeed is available in this single location, from scheduling courses and completing government paperwork to getting questions answered about benefits and employment opportunities.

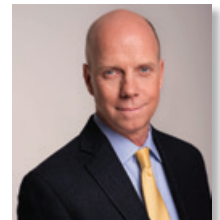
MTSU's senior advisor for veterans and leadership initiatives, retired Army Lt. Gen. Keith M. Huber, leads MTSU's ongoing push to help student veterans be successful at college.

Here are just two recent highlights from the Daniels Center's many activities:

- Spring 2023 marked MTSU's 25th Graduating Veterans Stole Ceremony, with more than 620 red stoles distributed at these events. Over the years, the ceremonies have changed and grown. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Veterans Stole Ceremony was the first large-scale virtual event that MTSU hosted. Along the way, the Daniels Center began providing stoles to veterans on the faculty and staff as well. Perhaps one of the biggest adaptations is the practice of veteran alumni wearing the red stoles when returning to campus events.

- Physician Assistant Studies master's student veteran Maranda Vecchio was honored at the Grand Ole Opry's Salute to Veterans. She was brought on stage at the Grand Ole Opry and appeared on WKRN's Local on 2 along with Huber.

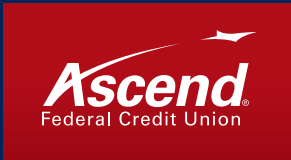
- Olympic gold medalist and bestselling author Scott Hamilton delivered the keynote address for the sixth annual MTSU Veteran Impact Celebration benefiting the Center on Friday, Aug. 25.



- In an effort to help veterans maximize their health care benefits, VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System and the Daniels Center hosted the Murfreesboro PACT Act Summer VetFest on Aug. 7 at MTSU's Miller Education Center on Bell Street.

- As a follow-up to the Big Machine Music City Grand Prix, the Daniels Center received \$350,000 in donations during race weekend from two entities known for their support of those who have served our nation in uniform. Southern Company, through its Alabama Power, Georgia Power, and Southern Company Gas foundations, collectively donated \$250,000 to the center, while the Harbaugh Foundation announced a \$100,000 gift.

I continue to be very proud of the work the Daniels Center does and the mission it is accomplishing to enroll military-connected students, encourage them while they are here, help them find employment after graduation, educate the MTSU community about veteran issues, and to expand the veteran-education knowledge base to non-students in the region.



We can't wait to welcome you to our MTSU Arts performances, exhibitions, and concerts in 2023–24, proudly presented for the 12th consecutive year by Ascend Federal Credit Union.

Join us for these featured events from the upcoming season and find more at our events calendar at mtsu.edu/mtsuartrts.



ART AND DESIGN

Visiting artist exhibition, Aug. 28–Sept. 9, Todd Art Gallery:
The season begins with a graphic design show by Jessica Hische, a graphic and type designer, lettering artist, and *New York Times* bestselling author and illustrator.



DANCE

Spring Dance Concert, April 18–20, Tucker Theatre:
Round out the season with this collaborative production showcasing the work of our talented Dance students and faculty!



THEATRE

Rodgers + Hammerstein's Cinderella, Nov. 2–5, Tucker Theatre:
Thinking of skipping this award-winning musical with a classic score? Impossible! Will Ella live happily ever after? It's possible!



ART CELEBRATION

Also, don't forget our **MTSU Arts Celebration Concert Jan. 27 at Tucker Theatre**. It's our annual celebration of the best of MTSU Arts. Stay tuned for updates about this year's special guest host and our MTSU Arts Hall of Fame inductee.



MUSIC

Jazz Ensemble I, March 18, Hinton Hall:
This concert features our most experienced student jazz artists, who frequently perform cutting-edge new works, big band classics, and original student compositions and arrangements.

For the latest information on the 2023–24 MTSU Arts season or to become a member of the MTSU Arts Patrons Society, visit mtsu.edu/mtsuartrts or call 615-898-5223.

TRUE BLUE TV AND EVENT PRODUCTIONS



Our TV station and our Event Productions team (formerly Production Services) merged July 1 into a single entity under the True Blue TV brand.

The combination makes sense in many ways, most notably since Event Productions stages and records many of our most important events, meetings, and concerts—and those live broadcasts and recorded shows are shown on our television station (along with streaming services and social media, of course).

True Blue TV Event Productions, led by **Director Robert Mogensen** and based in the James Union Building, is the exclusive provider of event services (sound, lighting, video, staging, roof structures, and other special elements) for all of campus except the Student Unions. Working with the Event Coordination team, they bring to life special events, concerts, and activities in our biggest indoor spaces, including Murphy Center, Floyd Stadium, Alumni Memorial Gym, the MT Center in the Ingram Building, the Tom Jackson Building, and the Rec Center, and many outdoor spaces, such as Walnut Grove and the Quad. It also offers event production services for off-campus events sponsored by University groups.

True Blue TV's television operation continues to be based in the Learning Resource Center and is headed by **Senior Manager Ty Whitaker**. Launched in 1999, it is the premier hub for video content and live event programming, presenting a diverse blend of programming, including campus lectures and academic activities, live and encore broadcasts of University events and ceremonies, features on our undergraduate and graduate majors, and classroom and professional resources for K–12 schools and educators provided by MTSU's Center for Educational Media in the College of Education.

On July 1, **David Foster** assumed leadership over the combined operation as senior director of True Blue TV Operations. Foster will help both teams expand their audience reach and customer service. He is also a point of contact for University offices seeking help or strategies to stage, broadcast, share, and archive University events and happenings. He can be reached at david.foster@mtsu.edu.

BLUE print

SERVICES BY BLUE PRINT SOLUTIONS

Blue Print, the new name for our entire printing services operations on campus, continues to thrive, thanks to that team's ability to develop and offer new services to the campus community.

Blue Print now offers much more than just printing. It has evolved into an on-campus solution center for a wide range of services, from large-format mounted posters to yard signs to brochures and booklets to class projects (and, of course, it still does black-and-white and color copies). And, coming this fall, Blue Print will be an on-campus outlet for customized T-shirts for campus events and activities.

Come visit Blue Print at its storefront location on the first floor of the Student Union to learn more about its services.

Kristy O'Neal, now Blue Print's director, can be reached at kristy.oneal@mtsu.edu.



MIDDLE TENNESSEE

STATE UNIVERSITY.

I AM *true***BLUE**.

0723-2234 / Middle Tennessee State University does not discriminate against students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, disability, age, status as a protected veteran, genetic information, or any other legally protected class with respect to all employment, programs, and activities sponsored by MTSU. The Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and Compliance has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies and can be reached at Cope Administration Building 116, 1301 East Main Street, Murfreesboro, TN 37132; Christy.Sigler@mtsu.edu; or 615-898-2185. The MTSU policy on non-discrimination can be found at mtsu.edu/tec.