

# NEWS & information

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Sidney A. McPhee



### Welcome to the Spring 2021 Semester!

As we return to campus and embrace the excitement and promise of a new semester, COVID-19 continues to demand our close attention.

#### Taking Stock

In a year marked by great uncertainty, struggle, and strife, stories of compassion, strength, and ingenuity emerged in 2020 that helped us understand our unique ability to carry on and thrive.

By taking stock of our blessings, we're inspired to find solutions and a path to recovery.

Here at Middle Tennessee State University, we recognized that uncertainty surrounding the coronavirus was affecting our students' ability to make decisions about the future. And we pledged to do everything possible to mitigate the unknowns and barriers that stood between students and their educational goals.

We know that, even in the best of times, college is a transitional period. Layer on social distancing and reduced contact with peers, and the isolating effects of the pandemic can easily become overwhelming.

In response to these stressors, our campus community ramped up efforts to communicate and connect with students. Maintaining wellness, facilitating mental health check-ins, and finding reasons to celebrate are more vital than ever during this uncertain time.

Together, let's remain mindful that through our reactions to the challenges of this global viral outbreak, we are writing our own stories.

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### Student Success

We work to ensure that all students who attend MTSU get the individual attention and support they need to graduate. We call this student success and even have a cabinet-level office devoted to it.

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### Admissions

MTSU reported the largest year-over-year enrollment gains last fall among the state's locally governed institutions.

Our growth during these challenging times was not an accident—it came from deliberate, focused, and relentless work by our faculty and staff during a global crisis.

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And we hope that when future generations read our stories, it inspires a sense of confidence that they can overcome their own challenges and find gratitude in the process.

### Looking Back

MTSU quickly pivoted to remote instruction in March 2020 during the pandemic's first surge.

In late April, MTSU was among the first in the nation to announce it would resume some on-campus classes and operations for the Fall 2020 semester.

### By modifying our campus spaces and our behaviors, we endured.

We developed a plan of action emphasizing the use of face masks, handwashing, and social distancing, as advised by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

By modifying our campus spaces and our behaviors, we endured.

Indeed, Fall 2020 showed us what we can achieve. The pandemic challenged us every step of the way, but we persevered. We completed the semester with a large portion of our classes held in person. We even celebrated graduation together in Floyd Stadium on a sunny and temperate November day.

### Looking Ahead

Spring 2021 depends on our continued commitment to this path. Our continued vigilance. Our continued willingness to adapt.

We remain concerned about the recent surge in the pandemic in our state and county, and we must continue to be vigilant in our efforts to protect the health and safety of our campus.

The campus will maintain its array of course types for the upcoming semester, ranging from in-person to remote synchronous, and continue requirements put into place last summer mandating the wearing of face masks in campus buildings and other protective measures.

MTSU's COVID-19 Task Force will continue to engage faculty, staff, and other stakeholders to lay out any needed future scenarios and develop recommendations.

The University's actions will ultimately be guided by the advice and recommendations of federal and state health officials, just as they have been since the beginning of this pandemic.

### True Blue Teamwork

I deeply appreciate the perseverance and dedication of our students, faculty, and staff, which allowed us to complete the Fall 2020 semester and poised us

for a safe return as the Spring 2021 term begins.

I promise to do my best to provide frequent and transparent communication to our entire University family. Whether through weekly updates, community town halls, targeted communications, or even one-on-one communications when needed, **it is my intent to keep you fully informed and abreast of our plans and mitigation strategies.**

As always, I welcome your feedback and comments. Please contact me at [sidney.mcphee@mtsu.edu](mailto:sidney.mcphee@mtsu.edu). I also invite you to check out my blog, available at [mtsu.edu/president](http://mtsu.edu/president), for updates and information from my office.

The True Blue community has grown accustomed to the precautions required by the coronavirus. The unknowns are fewer, and the arrival of vaccines gives us hope that the end of this pandemic is not so far away.

Despite the obstacles, let's commit to making this the best semester our new and returning students could imagine!

True Blue!

SIDNEY A. MCPHEE



## ADMISSIONS

Our official head count reported for Fall 2020 was 22,084, an increase of 369 students compared with numbers from Fall 2019.

MTSU's undergraduate enrollment of 19,192, while down 1.35% from the previous year, still placed the University tops among the LGIs.

Also, in converting head count into full-time equivalencies, MTSU's 17,905 number was up just shy of 1%. MTSU was the only LGI to show increases in both head count and full-time equivalencies.

The University's enrollment surge was fueled by an almost 28% growth in our College of Graduate Studies, as well as by record retention efforts of currently enrolled undergraduates.

New graduate enrollment at MTSU outperformed our LGI peers, jumping by 631 this year, to 2,982 total.

Student success efforts led by deans and academic advisors helped MTSU retain 350 more students over last year, a 2.56% increase.

These days, MTSU's admissions and recruitment staff is navigating a whole new set of challenges to ensure MTSU remains a destination for prospective students.

In other years, we would be tallying the thousands of miles driven and hundreds of school visits and face-to-face recruitment events attended by our admissions staff. Instead, we developed a new program focusing on MTSU's 70 highest-priority feeder schools, conducted remotely. We also created a series of virtual get-to-know-us

sessions geared to students in many of the cities our True Blue Tour visited in past years.

We created signature True Blue Recruitment boxes to get information and promotional materials into the hands of our high school recruiting partners—who, in turn, helped share those with students.



And we created a new, one-year-only scholarship plan called Bridging the Gap to draw

back any student who was offered one of our guaranteed scholarships for Fall 2020 but decided to take a gap semester or year. Those students are able to roll over their initial awards to Spring 2021 or Fall 2021.

Despite ongoing restrictions, prospective students and their families continue to reach out for information. Our recruiting staff has increased its online presence on social media platforms, along with reaching out to students and high school counselors through email and text messaging. Throughout the fall term, we maintained a robust calendar of both online and socially distanced new student recruiting events. More than 675 prospective students and families logged into one of our online True Blue Tour events, and our recruiters have also been busy working with students through more than 300 online information sessions and 150 virtual college fairs and high school visits.

Although we provide excellent virtual tour opportunities online, visiting the campus in person remains a high priority

for many of our prospective students. This fall, more than 1,300 students and their families came to campus and toured with our Blue Elite tour guides. To accommodate them safely, we increased the number of tour times offered daily so that we could reduce the size of tour groups, sometimes limiting tours to individual families. The Admissions Office and Creative Marketing Solutions worked together on the installation of informational signage to support a self-guided walking tour of campus, to be available to guests early in the spring semester.

Because of reduced availability of the ACT and SAT tests around the country, the MTSU Testing Office added test dates for the ACT on-campus (residual) test, allowing students the opportunity for a first-time test or to improve a score. Additionally, we pushed back the deadline for our guaranteed freshman scholarships. Although in previous years we have held to a strict Dec. 1 freshman scholarship deadline, this year our Financial Aid Office worked throughout the month of December to qualify students for scholarships, including accepting ACT scores from the nationwide Dec. 12 ACT test date. This month, we are pivoting to awarding additional scholarships to students who make a late decision to apply to MTSU.

**300** online information sessions

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**150** virtual college fairs

This has been a year like no other, so comparisons are difficult to make. Our numbers of applications and admitted students for the coming year are not what we would expect in a typical year, but week after week, we see the gap closing because of the effort of an entire campus coming together to recruit the next class of MTSU freshmen and transfer students.

# THE NEW NORMAL

The following is a brief but comprehensive guide that we all must follow if we are to achieve our collective goal of on-campus instruction.

To be safe as a student, faculty member, or staffer:

- Continue vigilance with masking and physical distancing both on and off campus.
- Limit exposure to enclosed public spaces such as restaurants, gyms, and coffee shops.
- Quarantine after a known exposure and submit self-reporting form through link on PipelineMT.
- Protect our most vulnerable populations, only visiting while properly masked.
- Conduct activities outside when possible.
- Monitor when vaccine will be available for your age group and get it ASAP.
- Practice healthy habits of stress management, including daily exercise and participating in safe events that are enjoyable for you.



## Mask Requirement

(for students, faculty, and staff)

### 1. Do I have to wear a mask?

Masks or face coverings are required inside all campus buildings, including classrooms, labs, offices, and common areas such as hallways, stairways, elevators, restrooms, and other shared spaces. Masks and social distancing also are highly recommended when outdoors. Students who fail to follow all social distancing protocols, including wearing masks and maintaining 6 feet of distance, may be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Faculty and staff who fail to follow all social distancing protocols may be reported to Human Resource Services.

### 2. How are we defining “mask”?

A mask is a face covering that fits snugly against the side of the face; completely



covers the nose and mouth; is secured with ties or ear loops; includes multiple layers of fabric; allows for breathing without restriction; and can be laundered and machine-dried without damaging or changing its shape. Appropriate masks include disposable single-use paper masks with ear loops or ties, gaiters, balaclavas, and bandanas.

### 3. What happens if I forget my mask? Where will I be able to obtain one?

Academic departments will have a limited number of disposable masks for students who forget their masks. Administrative departments will have disposable masks for visitors. Masks also can be purchased at MTSU’s Phillips Bookstore in the Student Union.

### 4. Will personal protective equipment (PPE) be provided to staff and students?

The University is providing reusable masks to all employees and students, along with reusable microfiber cloths, spray disinfectant, and no-touch thermometers to campus departments.

### 5. What should I do if I feel sick or if someone in my home is exhibiting symptoms?

- Do not go to campus.
- Separate yourself from other people.
- Monitor your symptoms.
- If you are a student, contact the Nurse Triage Line at Student Health Services at 615-494-7745 to report your symptoms and receive instructions about what to do next.
- If you are a faculty/staff member, contact your supervisor.

### 6. What happens if someone in my class is diagnosed with COVID-19?

- In a socially distanced classroom setting with all participants being 6 feet apart and wearing face

coverings, the current Tennessee Department of Health view is contagion risk is low and no quarantine of classroom participants is necessary.

- However, in a non-socially distanced classroom without face coverings, Tennessee Department of Health officials will work to quarantine close contacts.

### 7. What if students decide that it is too risky to be on campus and want to move their classes to online or remote options, will they be allowed to do so?

Students wishing to move their classes from on ground to online or remote after the semester begins and after the Drop/Add period will need to consult with their instructors and advisor. Students who anticipate this possibility should enroll in online/remote options.

### 8. How will students know what’s going on in a class that they missed because they were sick or isolated? Will we video all in-person classes?

Classrooms are being equipped to stream classes live as well as record for later viewing. For classes where recording may not be appropriate, instructors will provide alternate materials. A **Videos** link appearing in the navigation bar for every course in D2L will provide recordings of all class meetings. Students diagnosed with COVID-19 will be able to make up missed assignments/have accommodations made so that they can finish their classes, either on ground or online.

### 9. What arrangements are being made for students who need internships or student-teaching assignments to complete their degrees?

Students whose degree plans require internships, teaching residencies, or clinicals should discuss plans for these courses with their instructor/advisor/program director.



## Faculty and Staff

### 10. What if a student refuses to wear a mask?

- Faculty should attempt to de-escalate the situation by inviting the student to pick up their things and to meet them outside the classroom. The faculty member should ask the student to put on a mask. If the student does, both may return to the classroom. If the student refuses, they should be asked to leave the building.
- Faculty should report the student to the Office of Student Conduct ([mtsu.edu/student-conduct](https://mtsu.edu/student-conduct) or 615-898-2750).
- If the student refuses to wear a mask and will not leave the building, faculty may either dismiss the class or call University Police (615-898-2424 from any phone or 911 from a campus phone).

### 11. What happens if my supervisor does not wear a mask or tells me to take mine off?

- ALL employees, including supervisors, MUST WEAR a mask inside any campus building, except in private offices.
- Failure to do so could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

### 12. What should I do if someone contacts me about MTSU's safe return policies?

You may refer them to the MTSU COVID-19 Infoline at [mtsucovid19@mtsu.edu](mailto:mtsucovid19@mtsu.edu) or 615-396-9355.

### 13. Will I be allowed to work remotely?

Please see Policy 825-A COVID-19 Illness ([mtsu.edu/policies/personnel/825-A.php](https://mtsu.edu/policies/personnel/825-A.php)).

### 14. What happens if my student misses a class due to illness?

MTSU Policy 311 Class Attendance has been amended to account for face-

to-face/on-campus absences due to COVID-19. If a student is ill and cannot be present for a synchronous remote class, they should contact their instructor.



## Technology and Facilities

### 15. Will computer labs be available?

MTSU's large computer labs—BAS S137, KOM 350/351/360, the Adaptive Technology Center (Walker Library Room 174), and the Walker Library computer lab—as well as other smaller labs scattered throughout campus will be available. They will have reduced capacity because of required social distancing. Assistants in larger labs will clean computers in high-use areas every hour. For departmental labs with no assistants, computers will be cleaned daily.

### 16. If my classes are online, will MTSU provide computer and internet access if I don't already have it?

Yes, MTSU has a limited number of Chromebooks, laptops, and hot spots available for checkout. Contact ITD ([mtsu.edu/itd](https://mtsu.edu/itd))

### 17. Will there be workspaces on campus for students to use when they aren't in class or between classes?

- Campus computer labs will be open for students, along with various locations in Keathley University Center and the Student Union. Students will need to check the schedule of availability for spaces that also are being used as classrooms.
- In addition, wireless connectivity is being installed in some parking lots for students to use while in their cars.
- Walker Library will be open with limited occupancy. You can see the live occupancy numbers and library operating hours at [library.mtsu.edu/reopening](https://library.mtsu.edu/reopening).

### 18. What facilities on campus will be open?

- The campus just moved to Phase 2 operations, which means most offices are open and services are available.

However, there may be modifications for safety reasons.

- All operating hours will be posted at building entrances and on their websites. For lab hours, students should consult their instructor or the lab manager.
- MTSU's Phillips Bookstore is open and applying safe practices for staff and customers. They also will order materials for you online with free shipping and curbside pickup.

### 19. How will Raider Xpress operate?

- Occupancy will be reduced to 50% capacity.
- Shields have been installed to protect drivers and passengers during loading and unloading.
- All occupants, including drivers, are required to wear masks.
- All buses will be completely wiped down/sanitized at the end of each shift.



## MTSU COVID Cleaning Protocols

For institutions of higher education, the CDC recommends normal routine cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces and objects (doorknobs, light switches, desks, tables, sink handles, countertops, etc.), using EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19.

In addition, the CDC has issued guidance for cleaning and disinfecting after a person suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 has been in a facility. These recommendations and guidance have been reviewed and incorporated in the cleaning and disinfecting standards for the campus as summarized below.

### Routine Cleaning/Disinfecting

Occupied facilities are being cleaned on a daily/routine basis with enhanced standards for cleaning/disinfecting high-touch surfaces or shared objects. These enhanced standards include:

## THE NEW NORMAL

- Adding disinfecting services to high-touch surfaces for all spaces currently being cleaned by Custodial Services. These services are performed:
  - \* Daily (in some cases overnight) for building spaces, classrooms, and labs
  - \* Multiple times a day for public areas, restrooms, gathering areas, elevators, etc.
  - \* Weekly for offices
- Providing supplemental disinfecting products to departments for their use on surfaces and shared objects on an intermittent, as-needed basis. These space categories include:
  - \* academic labs
  - \* computer labs
  - \* departmental office suites
  - \* others upon request and approval

In addition to the increased cleaning and disinfecting standards, it is anticipated, though not required, that faculty, staff, students, and visitors could and would use personal disinfecting products, such as wipes, as they would in other public venues.

### Cleaning and Disinfection after Persons Suspected/Confirmed to Have COVID-19 Have Been in a Facility

Once a person suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 is known to have been in a facility, cleaning/disinfecting of the facility, area, or space is required in accordance with CDC guidelines. This process begins with a requirement to notify Health Services of the person's health status. Health Services will confirm the health status of the individual and review the circumstances, such as timing of symptoms/confirmed diagnosis, social contacts, and facilities and spaces visited. During and immediately following the review:

- Health Services will notify the department to close off space(s), if necessary, to meet the CDC time requirement before cleaning and disinfecting.
- The department will notify Facilities Services and coordinate/schedule the required cleaning and disinfecting services. Special requirements, such as sensitive equipment, are to be considered in the coordination.



- Facilities Services will perform the cleaning and disinfecting services and notify the department when the space(s) is available to be re-opened for regular use.
- Only authorized cleaning personnel should enter a space closed for cleaning.
- Other departments affected by the space closure (Maintenance, University Police, academics, etc.) will be notified to prevent a possible exposure.

### COVID Changes in Residence Halls

- Residence hall occupancy has been reduced, and every student is assigned to a private or single bedroom.
- Move-in was extended from three to five days prior to the start of classes.
- Residents will be expected to wear face coverings when outside of their individual rooms.
- Outside visitors are restricted from entering residence halls and student apartments.
- Overnight visitation is suspended indefinitely.
- Many community gathering areas, like lounges, practice rooms, and study rooms, are closed.
- Isolation and quarantine space has been set aside for residents who become ill.

### COVID Changes in MT Dining

- Dining area seating has been reduced to allow for 6 feet of distance between tables and chairs.
- Self-service and buffet-style dining has been eliminated.
- Contactless payment options will be implemented.
- To-go options and online pre-order with in-person pickup will be offered.

### MTSU'S Response

- View an archive of the emails that have gone to students, faculty, and staff, an FAQ regarding MTSU's response to the outbreak, and additional resources on the Response to Coronavirus Disease website. [mtsu.edu/coronavirus](https://mtsu.edu/coronavirus)
- In addition, the Stay on Course website was created to provide resources to MTSU faculty and students to help ease the transition to online learning. [mtsu.edu/stayoncourse](https://mtsu.edu/stayoncourse)

I AM *true* **BLUE**

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

# MTSU COVID Requirements for Students

REGARDING YOUR OWN HEALTH AND SYMPTOMS	
IF	THEN
If you have symptoms that might be COVID-related but have not yet seen a doctor or been tested	You are not to come to class or be out and about on campus if you have a COVID-related symptom or risk factor. Call the Nurse Triage Line at MTSU Student Health Services at 615-494-7745 and make arrangements to see a provider and be tested. While waiting for test results, you must remain in quarantine in your room or apartment so that you do not have contact with other people. If you live on campus, please notify your housing staff so they can assist you in moving to alternative housing, if necessary, and receiving meals.
If you receive a negative COVID test result and you feel no symptoms	You may resume contact with others and return to class if you have a negative test result AND you have been symptom-free for 24 hours. At this point you are no longer considered suspect for COVID-19.
If you receive a positive COVID test result and you feel no symptoms	You must isolate away from other people for a total of at least 10 days from the date you took the test. The 10 days start the day after the positive test. You may resume contact with others and return to class on Day 11 if you have remained symptom-free. If you live on campus, please notify your housing staff so they can assist you in moving to alternative housing, if necessary, and receiving meals.
If you receive a positive COVID test result and you are experiencing symptoms	You must isolate away from other people for a total of at least 10 days from the start of symptoms and be symptom-free for 24 hours. The 10 days start the day after symptoms start. You may resume contact with others and return to class on Day 11 if you have been symptom-free for 24 hours. If you live on campus, please notify your housing staff so they can assist you in moving to alternative housing, if necessary, and receiving meals.

REGARDING THE TESTING STATUS OF OTHERS AROUND YOU	
IF	THEN
If you have been in close contact (defined as within 6 feet for more than 10 minutes) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19	<b>You must either:</b> Quarantine for 10 days (PREFERRED), starting the day AFTER the last contact with the person who is infected. You may resume contact with others on Day 11 if you have no symptoms. <b>OR</b> Quarantine for 7 days and provide a negative COVID test (antigen or PCR) taken on or after Day 7. You may resume contact with others on Day 8 if you have no symptoms.
If someone you live with receives a positive COVID test result and you continue to share space with that person	<b>You must either:</b> Quarantine for 10 days from the start of their symptoms PLUS an additional 10 days (PREFERRED) after the person is no longer ill (20 days total). You may resume contact with others on Day 21 if you have no symptoms. <b>OR</b> Quarantine 10 days from the start of their symptoms PLUS an additional 7 days and provide a negative COVID test (antigen or PCR) taken on or after Day 17. You may resume contact with others on Day 18 if you have no symptoms.
If you have been in the presence of someone who tested positive but not in close contact (defined above)	You do not need to quarantine or take any other action.

## MTSU COVID Directive for Employee Screening and Staying/Going Home

### REGARDING YOUR OWN HEALTH AND SYMPTOMS

IF	THEN
If you have symptoms that might be COVID-related and you are at home	You should not to come to campus. You must report symptoms to your supervisor and submit the MTSU form at <a href="https://mtsu.edu/covidreporting">mtsu.edu/covidreporting</a> . You should visit your health care provider as soon as possible to be tested. While waiting for test results, you should quarantine.
If you have symptoms that might be COVID-related and you are already on campus	You should report symptoms to your supervisor and submit the MTSU form at <a href="https://mtsu.edu/covidreporting">mtsu.edu/covidreporting</a> . You should visit your health care provider as soon as possible to be tested. While waiting for test results, you should quarantine to avoid contact with others.
If you receive a negative COVID test result and you have no symptoms	You may return to work if you have been symptom-free for 24 hours.
If you receive a positive COVID test result and you have no symptoms	You must isolate for at least 10 days from the date you took the test. The 10 days starts the day after the positive test. You may return to work on Day 11 if you have remained symptom-free.
If you receive a positive COVID test result and have symptoms	You must isolate for at least 10 days from the start of symptoms and be symptom-free for 24 hours. The 10 days starts the day AFTER symptoms start. You may resume contact with others on Day 11 if you have been symptom-free for 24 hours.

### REGARDING THE TESTING STATUS OF OTHERS AROUND YOU

IF	THEN
If you <b>have been</b> in close contact (defined as within 6 feet for more than 10 minutes) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19	<b>You must either:</b> Quarantine for 10 days (PREFERRED), starting the day AFTER the last contact with the person who is infected. You may resume contact with others on Day 11 if you have no symptoms. <b>OR</b> Quarantine for 7 days and provide a negative COVID test (antigen or PCR) taken on or after Day 7. You may resume contact with others on Day 8 if you have no symptoms.
If someone you live with receives a positive COVID test result and you continue to share space with that person	<b>You must either:</b> Quarantine for 10 days from the start of their symptoms PLUS an additional 10 days (PREFERRED) after the person is no longer ill (20 days total). You may resume contact with others on Day 21 if you have no symptoms. <b>OR</b> Quarantine 10 days from the start of their symptoms PLUS an additional 7 days and provide a negative COVID test (antigen or PCR) taken on or after Day 17. You may resume contact with others on Day 18 if you have no symptoms.
If you have been in the presence of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, but you <b>have not been</b> in close contact (defined as within 6 feet for more than 10 minutes)	You do not need to quarantine or take any other action.





## CAMPUS PLANNING

Numerous improvements to our campus buildings are underway or have been recently completed.

### School of Concrete and Construction Management

- Abernathy Hall occupants were relocated before winter break in preparation for the demolition of the Abernathy and Ezell buildings.
- Phase 1 includes an expansion to the satellite chiller plant and demolition with site utilities, beginning this month. (Phase 2 is currently in the bidding phase.)

**\$4,732,000**  
in capital maintenance

- Construction activity for the relocated recording studios kicked off at its new location at 2111 E. Main St., formerly Parking Services.
- The construction cost for the 54,000-square-foot Concrete and Construction Management building is \$31,600,000.
- The estimated completion date is fall 2022.
- Hoar Construction was selected as the construction manager/general contractor.

- Flexible instructional spaces and discipline-specific labs are included in the project.
- The building will incorporate exposed structural and other building systems to be used as a teaching tool for students and visitors.

### Parking Services Facility

After almost 14 years at its East Main Street location, MTSU's Parking Services moved into a **new building at 205 City View Drive**. Transportation Services joined them in the new building. Though Parking and Transportation Services are part of the same department, they have been physically separated—located across campus from one another—for the last several years.

The relocation initially stemmed from the growth of the University's shuttle bus fleet. There are **three maintenance bays** in the new building to perform all of the services and maintenance needed on these buses.

The move frees up the East Main building parking lot for **more student parking**. It also frees up parking space at the Motor Pool lot, and space in the old Parking Services building for the Department of Recording Industry to use.

Separately, the department continues to work to make the majority of services available online. Students, faculty and staff only need to physically visit the

building to purchase their first parking decal. After that, **renewal can be completed online**. Visitors can purchase a parking pass online and print out the decal from home.

- New building is open and ready for Spring 2021 semester.
- Construction started in fall 2019 and finished earlier this month.
- It is at the corner of Alumni Drive and City View Drive.
- The 13,000-square-foot building combines all campus parking and shuttle bus functions— including permits, bus maintenance, and personnel offices—in one convenient location.

### Capital Maintenance Projects

- \$4,732,000 in capital maintenance projects to be completed soon, including:
  - \* a multiple building roof replacement project
  - \* renovations to Kirksey Old Main mechanical/HVAC systems
  - \* improvements to campus stormwater drainage systems
  - \* renovations to Stark Agriculture and the police station to include HVAC and sprinkler system work
  - \* boiler replacement at Miller Education Center



## ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I say it all the time, but it is true. At MTSU, there are simply too many good stories of high academic achievement to share, and too few pages to report on all of them!

Each of the colleges and academic units at MTSU maintains a high level of activity and produces news worth crowing about. Here, then, I offer up just a few examples of the remarkable work they are performing.

### Jones College of Business

MTSU's Center for Economic Education (CEE), housed in the Jones College of Business, received the **2019–20 Albert Beekhuis Award** from the New York-based Council for Economic Education. The award is named after a lifelong proponent of economic literacy. The MTSU center equips K–12 students with tools and knowledge of personal finance and economics to learn how to make better decisions for themselves, their families, and their communities. CEE will soon become the **Tennessee Council on Economic and Free Enterprise Education** at MTSU,

reflecting the center's relationship to the Council for Economic Education.

### College of Basic and Applied Sciences

The Department of Aerospace received delivery of **six new Diamond Aircraft 2020 DA40 XLT** airplanes to its student training fleet, and the Austria-based manufacturer also **refurbished 13 aircraft** in MTSU's existing fleet. MTSU Aerospace has grown into one of the most respected aviation programs in the U.S. It now has a fleet of 27 Diamond aircraft.

**Terrapin Beer Co.**, owned by Molson Coors Beverage Co., is partnering with MTSU Fermentation Science to offer an annual **\$10,000 scholarship** to underrepresented undergraduate students wanting to pursue a degree in this program. Molson Coors, which acquired the Athens, Georgia-based brewery in 2016, recently established a **\$25,000 endowment with MTSU** and similar partnerships with Colorado State University and Oregon State University. Corporate-funded scholarships are the gold standard of academic program endorsement.

### College of Education

MTSU's **in-the-field training** offered through its undergraduate elementary teacher preparation program has been ranked among the nation's best by the **National Council on Teacher Quality**. MTSU's clinical practice program stands out as among only 33 traditional elementary programs out of more than the 1,100 evaluated to **earn an A grade** in the NCTQ's 2020 Teacher Prep Review. The MTSU College of Education works to build strong relationships with its 42 partner school districts to improve appropriate mentor teacher selection

The College of Education launched two timely initiatives. First was the **Open Access Portal for Teachers and Caregivers**, which offers a blog, infographics, podcasts, videos, and webinars for teachers, parents, and caregivers who are faced with the responsibility of transitioning to online teaching and developing a home support strategy for digital learning. Next was the **Digital Learning Certificate** program. The 12-credit hour graduate certificate program is designed for practicing teachers across the PreK–12 domain, including instructional coaches,

curriculum designers, technology coaches, school leaders, and central office personnel who work within the many facets of school curriculum and instruction to provide digital learning and teaching.

## College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Classes began last semester in our newest campus building, which houses three disciplines in the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences. The \$39.6 million, 91,000-square-foot Academic Classroom Building is now home to the departments of Criminal Justice Administration, Psychology, and Social Work.

Prior to COVID-19, the United States was already experiencing a nursing shortage. Based on current retirement and departure trends, we may soon have a lot fewer of these heroes working in the field than we need. The MTSU School of Nursing prepares graduates to join the most honored and trusted profession in the world, representing the most immediate and most human component of our health care delivery system. In 2020, **the program boasted a record number of applicants—203—**for its B.S.N. program. It also launched the **Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner master's degree/certificate** track with 21 students in the M.S.N. online program. Also worth mentioning, MTSU Nursing undergraduate students administered more than **700 flu vaccination shots** to students and staff on campus last fall in collaboration with Health Services.

## College of Media and Entertainment

In October 2020, Recording Industry students helped support the production of the new **Reba McEntire and Cody Johnson music video "Dear Rodeo"** at Tennessee Miller Coliseum.

The **student crew of Media Arts Productions** produced a flawless streaming event for MTSU graduates during the trio of Fall 2020 **commencement** ceremonies held in Floyd Stadium on Nov. 21.

Media Arts' student animation team won **Best Tennessee Student Short** for their movie *Cat Burglar* at this year's Nashville Film Festival.



**Journalism and Strategic Media students** created a campuswide MTSU Safe Return campaign with the slogan "Wear Your Mask. Defend True Blue" that was implemented across the University.

A **student Public Relations team** won two first-place trophies at the 34th Annual Parthenon Awards in Nashville for their **Free Speech Center**-sponsored "1 for All @ MTSU Freedom Comes First" campaign.



The **Free Speech Center** released a groundbreaking white paper on how to best engage college students on First Amendment principles. *Learning About Liberty: Facilitating First Amendment Engagement Among University Students in the United States* was written by MTSU's **Brian Hinote**, associate vice provost for data analytics and student success.



WMOT Roots Radio 89.5 FM was chosen by the *Nashville Scene* as the "Writers' Pick" for Best Radio Station.

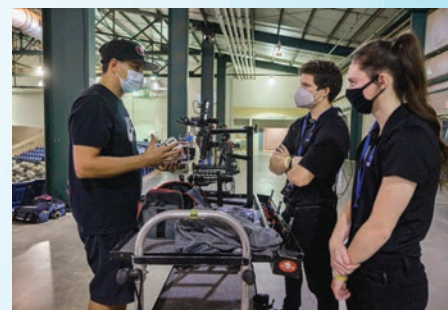
## College of Liberal Arts

A new academic concentration at MTSU is helping students promote greater understanding of health and health care.

Beginning in the Fall 2020 semester, Communication majors now have the option of pursuing a



Producer Christen Pinkston, an MTSU alumna, with director Shaun Silva and first assistant director Tim Kloete at the "Dear Rodeo" video shoot



Sean Collins (l), first assistant camera, with seniors Jo Litzenberger and Brea Robbins (r) at the "Dear Rodeo" video shoot

**special concentration in Health Communication.** In addition to taking the core communication classes, students learn about such issues as patient-provider communication, internal hospital communication, and influencing behavior change for optimal health outcomes. While the curriculum was in the works long before the coronavirus began to dominate headlines, the timing of the new concentration is beneficial in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.



## ACADEMIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Associate Dean **Leah Lyons** will become interim dean of the College of Liberal Arts on Feb. 1. A professor of French and Francophone Studies, Lyons brings an excellent

record of teaching, scholarship, and service to the position. She also has served as director of the M.A. in Liberal Arts program; as interim chair of the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures; and in various other departmental leadership roles.

The MTSU Board of Trustees recently approved a new Bachelor of Arts and a new Master of Arts in Art Therapy.

### Honors College

Dean **John R. Vile** was interviewed extensively by media outlets,

especially on the issue of presidential concession speeches. Vile also was named the **Phi Kappa Scholar** for 2020–22, and had his book *The Bible in American Law and Politics: A Reference Guide* published.

### Walker Library

Professor **Kathleen Schmand** became the new dean of Walker Library effective Jan. 4. Schmand has extensive experience in academic libraries, primarily at Northern Arizona University.

She emerged from a pool of highly qualified candidates to secure the position here.



### University College

MTSU's **Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)** program continues to provide adult students the opportunity to

accelerate completion of their degrees using credits earned by documenting professional training and work experience. In its 14th year, the program has served more than **900 students** earning an average of 23 credit hours.

**PLA is now available at the graduate level** through University College's Master of Professional Studies, which allows graduate students to document and use 6 hours of credit from their prior learning toward completion of a graduate degree. And because this degree is offered completely online, it is a good opportunity for adults with hectic and unpredictable schedules and for those who travel to or live away from campus.

University College partnered with **Motlow State Community College** to help create a pathway for adult learners to "finish faster." Motlow's General Studies majors now can enroll in MTSU's Prior Learning Assessment class



to earn up to 19 credit hours, which can be reverse transferred back to Motlow to complete their associate degrees. After graduating from Motlow, students then reenroll at MTSU and can finish their baccalaureate degree in record time.

After a year filled with adaptations, the Applied Leadership program is set to broaden its corporate reach. When the program was created, it was designed with four in-person intensive courses required for the degree. This has often been a barrier to companies with employees outside of the middle Tennessee area, as travel expenses are not always in the budget. However, beginning this summer, the Applied Leadership program **can be accessed by any company or individual, nationwide**, with the introduction of regularly scheduled, remotely delivered intensives.



Academic Classroom Building



University College hired **Trey Martindale** as chief online learning officer, a newly created position that will focus on maximizing a growing area of instructional delivery for Blue Raiders both near and afar. With more than two decades of experience in instructional technology and

online learning, Martindale comes to MTSU from Mississippi State University, where he most recently served as an associate professor and department head in Instructional Technology and Workforce Development. Martindale also served various leadership roles during 12 years at the University of Memphis. MTSU Online also hired its third instructional designer, **Karen Hein**, who comes to MTSU from the University of Nebraska–Omaha, with an extensive background in supporting online course development.





Tutoring  
in over **200**  
courses

## STUDENT SUCCESS

Quest 2025 launched on Oct. 21, 2020, extending efforts that began with the original Quest of 2013, which led to the establishment of the Office of Student Success and incorporated the use of analytics to better identify at-risk students early in their academic careers and develop more effective strategies to keep them on track. Quest 2025's five strategic priorities are:

- invest in a comprehensive faculty development program that includes the integration of high impact practices in key curricula
- eliminate achievement gaps and increase the diversity of faculty and staff
- increase online, hybrid, and off-site offerings, adaptive scheduling, and curricular flexibility
- create and support a culture of service through all divisions of the University
- invest in a campuswide environment that fosters living-learning opportunities

Under the leadership of **Cornelia Wills**, director of student success, tutoring set a record-breaking semester for tutoring usage by students. Based on preliminary data, utilization of MTSU's free tutoring services **broke the record** set during the Fall 2017 semester, when students accessed tutoring over 11,000 times. With the safety of students as a priority, the decision was made to continue tutoring in a remote format during the Fall 2020 term. Tutoring continues to be available in over 200 courses

in subjects such as biology, mathematics, accounting, history, and recording industry.

**Supplemental Instruction (SI)** also helped students to better understand course content and raise their grades, and continues to help in the success of our students. Employing students who previously excelled in the particular courses as SI leaders, Wills directed the pivoting of the SI program to a remote format last March and has maintained that effort throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Planning is underway to offer a hybrid (both on-ground and remote) version of this important initiative for Fall 2021.

Because of the pandemic, Scholars Academy hosted its first remote Freshman Summer Institute and subsequent student interactions. While navigating the uncertainty of the Fall 2020 semester, **Breinda Johnson**, with the assistance of staff and peer mentors, helped the 2020 cohort to achieve a **96% persistence rate for the Spring 2021 semester** as of the beginning of January. The Black Male Initiative was a success for the Scholars Academy cohort as well.

The new, grant-funded program **RECOVER** was implemented in the Fall 2020 semester for first-generation and minority students on probation. One component of the RECOVER program is **microgrants** that support students financially. Sixty-four students opted into this program for the fall semester, and 56% of the most at-risk students at our University are eligible to register for the Spring 2021 semester.

In its sixth year, **REBOUND** continues to serve freshman students who achieve below a 2.0 grade point average their first fall semester at the University. For the previous five years, students who qualified for the program and participated were **50% more likely to return** for their sophomore year than were those students who qualified but didn't participate. Over the winter break, 624 students were contacted several times and invited to participate in the nationally recognized program.

**Under the leadership of Cornelia Wills, director of student success, tutoring set a record-breaking semester for tutoring usage by students.**

For students and advisors, **the pivot to remote advising** during Spring 2020 was particularly successful. Students were far more likely to attend their scheduled appointments compared with the Fall 2019 semester (with only 754 students failing to attend their advising appointments in Fall 2020, compared with nearly 2,300 in Fall 2019). These are all quite impressive benchmarks and outcomes, and reflect the hard work of MTSU advisors, faculty, and staff in serving our students.

Among several campus initiatives funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the University will be participating in a program to transition from emergency remote learning to **intentionally designed online pedagogy**.



## STUDENT LIFE

The formula for student success involves more than just ensuring students make it to class, fulfill course obligations, and get consistent and proper academic advising on the journey toward a degree. After all, college life is more than just books and classrooms. Here, then, is a look at plans to enhance Student Life in the semester ahead.

In celebration of **Black History Month**, the Intercultural and Diversity Center will host a month-long series of events. With a theme of “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity,” the February events will feature a mix of performances, keynotes, and panels designed to be virtual, entertaining, and educational. This year’s featured keynote speaker event, to be livestreamed at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23, will feature education, author, activist, and television personality **Marc Lamont Hill**. Hill is a professor of Media Studies and Urban Education at Temple University

in Philadelphia. For more information on the schedule of Black History Month events and how to access virtually, visit [mtsu.edu/aahm](https://mtsu.edu/aahm).

**Women’s History Month** will be celebrated throughout the month of March. The events always include a well-known keynote speaker who inspires audience members to empower themselves and others. This year we are welcoming **Mary Frances Berry**, former chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, to MTSU via virtual keynote followed by a Q&A. An events calendar will be available by mid-February at [mtsu.edu/jac](https://mtsu.edu/jac).



The Division of Student Affairs is rolling out a new website highlighting MTSU’s campus life at [mtsu.edu/campuslife](https://mtsu.edu/campuslife). Here you can find the most up-to-date information on getting involved on campus, events, and other resources offered by all areas of Student Affairs.



## connection point

The **Connection Point** program continues to be an effective initiative to engage our first-semester freshman students with a variety of out-of-classroom involvement activities. Fall 2020 marked the beginning of the program’s eighth year! While COVID-19 required us to make several adjustments because of physical distancing protocols, we were still able to host a full menu of virtual, online, and in-person events, including the Raider Quest Scavenger Hunt, several outdoor movies, an outdoor concert, the Student Involvement Fair, Rep Your Roots, and comedian Deon Cole. In total, 115 weekend programs and a variety of midweek programs were promoted to our students in the Fall 2020 semester. As our calendar is continually changing, please see [mtsu.edu/connect](https://mtsu.edu/connect) for the most updated information.



## GRADUATE STUDIES

Leading our remarkable enrollment growth last fall, the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) saw an almost 28% increase in enrollment with a 11.2% increase in persistence for Spring 2021.

- With federal funding, MTSU's **Center for Health and Human Services (CHHS)** will tackle the opioid epidemic in rural Wilson County communities. The center will use a **\$200,000 planning grant** from the Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Partners in the 18-month endeavor include Wilson County's DrugFree WilCo, MTSU's Department of **Health and Human Performance**, and MTSU's **Data Science Institute**.
- CGS works under the philosophy that every applicant, every student, and

every graduate counts. We are here to provide the educational needs of the people in our region and beyond. Our mission is to connect potential students to MTSU's high quality graduate programs and to facilitate their journey through graduation.

- Started the highly successful Data Sciences Graduate Certificate in fall 2020. The first cohort will earn their certificates in spring 2021.
- We are reaching out to potential students who are interested in turning the Covid crisis into the opportunity to pivot their careers.
- The MTSU Alumni Association featured the College of Graduate Studies in a Zoom webinar "New Year Goals: I Want to Start Grad School" on January 6. We seek to connect with alumni who are ready for their next educational steps toward achieving their goals.

**28%** increase in Graduate Studies enrollment

- MTSU's Board of Trustees endorsed the creation of a **master's degree in Physician Assistant Studies** that could be offered May 2022. The program focuses on one of the largest of the fastest-growing occupational sectors in the region and aligns with the University's goal to create additional pipelines from undergraduate major to graduate programs. **Only one other public university**, the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, currently offers a master's in Physician Assistant Studies.





## RESEARCH

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 research-related highlights.

- Since July 1, 2020, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) assisted 72 faculty members, staff, and administrators representing 31 academic departments, research centers, and administrative departments to submit **72 proposals for external funding**, requesting a total of \$21,372,425. Forty principal investigators, representing 32 academic departments, research centers,
- and administrative departments at MTSU were awarded **49 new grants and contracts** during the first half of FY21, with a total award value of **\$7,816,024**. During this same period, the ORSP administered 194 active grants and contracts with a lifetime portfolio value of **\$51,717,893**.
- ORSP agreed to provide a total of **\$370,000 in startup funding** for nine new faculty members beginning at MTSU in Fall 2020 in eight departments in three colleges, in addition to **\$2,415,000** provided to previous new faculty since Fall 2016. New faculty startup funds are typically used for instrumentation, software, graduate student research assistants, travel, supplies, etc.,

**49** new grants

necessary to accelerate the development of the research and scholarship program toward successful pursuit of external funding.

- The Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grant program received **52 student applications** for the Fall 2020 deadline, from 36 individuals and eight teams, representing 18 departments in four colleges. The URECA Committee awarded a total of **\$37,349** to 19 individuals and three teams.



## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MTSU boasts significant international undergraduate and graduate student enrollment, robust study abroad opportunities, and numerous faculty and student exchanges.

Given the challenges presented by COVID-19, the field of study abroad—including the MTSU Office of Education Abroad—has been adapting to meet the needs of students with virtual academic programs. We remain cautiously optimistic about future study abroad and travel. Here are some changes we have implemented to meet the needs of our students while we wait for the world to reopen.

### Virtual Internships

The Office of Education Abroad offers virtual internships to students in the program through our affiliated program providers, CIEE, ISA, University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center, and USAC. These are great options for students who need an internship experience as part of their degree plan or for those who are interested in gaining collaborative, virtual experiences that are relevant to academic or personal interests.

### MT Online Intercultural Exchange

OIE is a collaborative virtual instructional approach that involves guided tasks and opportunities for social interaction between MTSU students and their international peers. Terms such as tele-collaboration, virtual exchange, and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) can be used interchangeably with OIE. The goal is to facilitate a connection among MTSU students, faculty, and international peers. This is done in existing MTSU classes by developing collaborative class activities that bring students together across time zones and language backgrounds.

## ADVANCEMENT

Private support continues to provide valuable resources for our campus, and donor support for the current fiscal year is approaching record levels.

Among recent gifts the University received was one from none other than country music star and former MTSU student Chris Young.

**A new live entertainment venue on the MTSU campus has been named the Chris Young Café to honor the multiplatinum Nashville entertainer's continued support of his alma mater.**

Young is lending his name—and financial support—for the project, which opens this month.

The café will be a teaching and practice place for student performers and technicians during the day and a performance venue at night for music, radio broadcasts, comedy, and other entertainment.

I believe the Chris Young Café will encourage our students to dream bigger. Young studied at MTSU and then launched a successful music industry career, so every time MTSU students see his name on the café, their aspirations will seem a little more obtainable if they follow in his footsteps and work as hard as he has.

Young, who attended MTSU in 2005, has an impressive list of accomplishments, including membership in the Grand Ole Opry, 2 billion on-demand streams, 12 million singles sold, and 11 career No. 1 singles. He has two Grammy nominations, as well as award nominations from the Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music.

A global ambassador for country music, Young has maintained his True Blue ties to our campus in Murfreesboro, funding an **annual scholarship for Recording Industry students** beginning in 2016 and donating a selection of his touring **audio equipment** in 2012.

Located in the Woodmore Building on the south side of campus and formerly known as the Cyber Café, the Chris Young Café has 3,200 square feet of space with two raised platform stages. The space is surrounded by windows, allowing for natural light, and is an easy walk from the Bragg Media and Entertainment Building.

## CMS-PRINTING SERVICES

We are blessed with a robust Printing Services department on our campus that puts our University community first every day.

CMS-Printing Services worked diligently behind the scenes—from the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic to print and install a wide range of signage across campus, to help students navigate “the new normal.”

The array of signs covers the spectrum, from posters to window clings to floor graphics and more.

Even in these challenging times of workplace social distancing, the CMS-Printing Services staff adapted extraordinarily well and has met all of its production deadlines.

All of this follows a nationwide trend among in-house collegiate printing operations from the early days of the pandemic as they were called into action to “get the word out.” MTSU’s CMS-Printing Services, like its peers across the U.S., rose to the occasion and excelled.



# CREATIVE MARKETING SOLUTIONS PHOTOGRAPHY



## YOU ASKED, WE LISTENED!

You said you wanted a simpler, faster, more understandable photography charge process. We get it.

**Photo assignments are now a flat fee for up to one hour.**

# \$50

Fee includes MTSU photographer’s time up to one hour at the assignment, editing, inserting metadata, archiving, and an electronic contact sheet. **PLUS up to 12 images (up to 4 of print quality)** may be requested without an additional charge.

Images can be provided immediately (photographer will select) after the event, or you may send a request for specific images upon receiving the contact sheet. Please specify if you want images provided to you immediately for an online gallery.

Respond with your image requests within 2 weeks upon receipt of contact sheet, based on date of photographer’s email. Indicate which images are for print as opposed to online, or we will send all online-resolution images.

Images requested after the 2-week period or additional images beyond this quantity will be charged on a per-image basis.

### OLD WAY

Assignment 1hr.:	\$20
Archiving: (20 images from shoot)	\$24
Images: (3 social media images)	\$15
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$59</b>
on two different invoices	

### NEW WAY

Assignment 1 hr.:	\$50
Includes photoshoot, archiving, and up to 12 images	
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$50</b>
on one invoice	

### Let’s Get Started!

- Fill out forms at [mtsu.edu/creativesolutions](https://mtsu.edu/creativesolutions)
- Call our office at **615-898-2744**
- Email [photorequests@mtsu.edu](mailto:photorequests@mtsu.edu)



## TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENTS

MTSU's ongoing and expanding focus on technology is even more essential in a time of COVID-19 and the need for secure and reliable remote service.

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.

I cannot thank this department and its leadership enough for the way it has stepped up throughout this crisis and kept our University on the cutting edge of education delivery.

By doing so, the division has prepared us well for an even bolder future in the information age.

Here, then, are some recent technology enhancement highlights. True Blue!

### COVID-Related Work

In partnership with the Provost's Office, the Lea Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC); Faculty Instruction Technology Center (FITC); and Custom Application Development (CAD) department created an extensive **Stay on Course website** ([mtsu.edu/stayoncourse](https://mtsu.edu/stayoncourse)) for faculty and students. This site featured:

- extensive training on D2L, Zoom, and Panopto
- recordings of over 56 workshops
- Education professor **Susan Myers-Shirk's** "Teaching and Zooming" training
- detailed video and FAQs on new integrated classroom technology system implemented last fall

- calendar of all workshops
- how-to pages for both faculty and students on using the new test proctoring software, Examity ([mtsu.edu/examity](https://mtsu.edu/examity))
- and, of course, how to get live assistance

The LT&ITC provided over **300 consultations with faculty** over the fall semester providing technical, pedagogical, and design support. Along with this, the center also hosted:

- two faculty learning communities (topics: "Failing to Learn" and "Gamification")
- faculty mentoring (27 active participants)
- book/research groups:
  - \* *Teaching Effectively with Zoom: A Practical Guide to Engage Your Students and Help Them Learn*
  - \* *An Urgency of Teachers: The Work of Critical Digital Pedagogy*
  - \* *Small Teaching Online*
  - \* *So You Want to Talk About Race*

Over the course of 2020, the LT&ITC and FITC offered countless workshops over a variety of topics such as using Zoom, Panopto, Examity, and D2L. Total participation was **more than 4,000 attendees**, with over **78%** of our faculty attending at least one workshop. On average, **most faculty or staff attended three or more workshops last year.**

An automated equipment checkout application for students, faculty, and staff was developed and recently implemented. The

current inventory consists of Wi-Fi hot spots, Chromebooks, and laptops. A total of **909 devices were checked out** during the Fall 2020 semester. To check out equipment, go to [mtsu.edu/itd](https://mtsu.edu/itd) and click on Request Equipment.

In Fall 2020, more than 41% of courses (not completely online) were actively using D2L and Panopto classroom recordings. This means that **1,650 individual courses were being recorded every week** to not only reduce density on campus but, more importantly, also provide a valuable resource for our students.

Adobe offered free **Creative Cloud** licenses to students at the beginning of the pandemic. We have since secured a Creative Cloud license for those students who are taking classes that require this license.

**BlueID Online** was developed and implemented to enable creation of ID cards without students or staff having to physically visit the BlueID Office. Since July 1, 5,743 of the 5,982 ID cards that were printed were mailed.

**I cannot thank this department and its leadership enough for the way it has stepped up throughout this crisis and kept our University on the cutting edge of education delivery.**

Working with Student Health Services, ITD has developed a **COVID reporting system that is integrated with PipelineMT**. This should be available early Spring 2021 for faculty, staff, and students to report if they have tested positive for COVID or suspect they might be positive.

For classrooms, ITD has equipped 411 classrooms with a recording/streaming system with **automated scheduling and integration with Panopto**. They also are configured for video conferencing with platforms such as Zoom.

**Thirteen** additional nonclassroom spaces have temporarily been equipped to be used as classrooms.

An additional **40** classrooms have been converted from analog video to high definition digital video.



ITD installed Wi-Fi in several new parking locations on campus in Fall 2020 to provide supplemental Wi-Fi coverage in light of social distancing measures enforced in buildings on campus. This includes the Bell Street commuter lot, Greenland Lot B, the western half of the Softball Lot, and the north end of the Rutherford Boulevard Lot. Both parking garages on campus have featured Wi-Fi since their construction several years ago.

Look for the Wi-Fi network name and password in D2L or call the ITD Help Desk at 615-898-5345. You also can visit [mtsu.edu/maps/docs/CampusMap-WiFi.pdf](https://mtsu.edu/maps/docs/CampusMap-WiFi.pdf) for exact coverage locations.

### Learning Management System

As the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) contract for Desire2Learn Brightspace ends, ITD has worked with D2L on a new agreement at a significant savings to ensure **no loss of service for our classes through December 2026**. This means we not only will keep the full D2L learning management system but also will be adding **Brightspace Insights** and **LeaP**, which will allow faculty to track, measure, and monitor learner progress through a new dashboard interface. More details and workshops/training on these new features will be coming soon.

### PageUp

ITD has been assisting Human Resource Services with implementation

of **PageUp**, which will replace the PeopleAdmin system.

### Graduate Admissions Application

ITD is developing a **new admissions application** that will be rolled out for the College of Graduate Studies this spring. Applicants will be presented only questions that are applicable to their situation, which will be determined from answers to the first few application questions, thereby streamlining their online experience.

### Advanced Email Threat Protection

As part of our ongoing effort to improve our awareness of suspicious and malicious emails, starting in Spring 2021, ITD will begin implementing a new feature in our advanced email protection system that places a **red warning at the top of external email** message bodies. This will supplement the [EXTERNAL] tag that already appears in the subject line of external emails. Enabling this feature aligns with best practices implemented at other organizations, including peer higher education institutions, and will better position us to address the top ongoing IT security threat, which remains malicious external emails. Look for additional communications from ITD this spring.

### Exchange Online Migration for Faculty/Staff Email

ITD completed migrating all faculty and staff individual mailboxes to **Microsoft Exchange Online** last semester. As a reminder, this migration delivers several key benefits, including increasing mailbox sizes to **100 gigabytes**, improved collaboration with students, an improved web-mail experience, better integration with Microsoft Teams, and constant delivery of the latest features and enhancements to email as Microsoft develops them. We will conclude this project by migrating a few remaining shared mailboxes, including mailboxes used for departmental, fax, and room resources, in the Spring 2021 semester.

### Teams implementation

Starting in 2020, ITD began implementation of the **Microsoft**

**Teams** platform, which is the chat-based workspace in Microsoft 365 that makes it easy to have conversations, host meetings, share files, and collaborate on documents, as well as work with teams across the organization. Teams allows you to work in a natural, conversational way, with everything you need in one place, available anytime, on any device. ITD completed the first phase of implementing the collaboration features in Teams in 2020 and will complete the second phase of implementing the enterprise voice (telephony) features in 2021. Look for further communications from ITD for Teams announcements and additional training in 2021.

### New Endpoint Management System from Ivanti

Starting in 2020, ITD began implementation of a new system from **Ivanti** to manage MTSU computers in place of our former system from Kaseya. This new platform will bring several key benefits starting in 2021, including a **self-service software portal** where users can install software on demand without the need to contact ITD. In addition, Ivanti Endpoint Manager delivers the same functionality provided by Kaseya, including remote computer management, automated third-party software patching, and automated software installation over the network.

### Digital Assets Management

Specifications for the adoption of a universitywide digital asset management system have been developed. This new system will provide a **single platform** for departments to use to collect, classify, and retrieve digital assets. A request for proposals will be issued early in 2021 for the acquisition of the system.

### Computer Replacement

ITD is working on an **administrative computer replacement** and will start on the academic replacement in January/February.

### Faculty Instructional Laptops

All faculty and adjuncts were given the opportunity to receive an instructional laptop to assist with classroom and online teaching.



The pandemic has limited Blue Raider athletes from excelling at their usual high pace on the field of play, but it did not stop them from continuing to excel in the (virtual) classroom. Here are some exciting classroom statistics.

### Fall 2020 Stats

- 205 of 318 (64%) of all student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher GPA
- 137 (43.0%) of all student-athletes made the Dean's List by earning a 3.5 or higher GPA
- 52 (16%) of all student-athletes had a perfect 4.0 GPA
- 12 of 15 teams had a semester GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Tennis had the highest men's team GPA: 3.83
- Volleyball had the highest women's team GPA: 3.78

- Semester GPA for all student-athletes: 3.041

- Cumulative GPA for all student-athletes: 3.171

### School-Record Graduation Score, Third Nationally in Football

MTSU's NCAA Graduation Success Rate (GSR) set a new school record at 93%, as announced by the NCAA national office on Nov. 17. It's the seventh straight year MT has either equaled or set a new school record. The GSR is a four-year measure of freshmen and athletic transfers who entered MTSU between the Fall 2010 semester and the Spring 2013 semester. This marks the eighth consecutive year that MTSU has scored above 80%. The Blue Raiders ranked second amid the 14 teams in Conference USA, trailing only Rice, which scored 94%.

The Blue Raiders' score of 95% in football tied for third nationally

(Northwestern 97%, Duke 97%, MTSU 95%, and Vanderbilt 95%) and easily led the way in Conference USA, as Rice was second at 88%.

### United Soccer Coaches Team Academic Award

MTSU women's soccer was awarded the United Soccer Coaches Team Academic Award for the 2019–20 academic year. The Raiders finished with a 3.36 GPA and earned the honor for the 19th straight time in program history.

*Outside of the classroom, despite having fewer opportunities to shine, Blue Raider athletes nevertheless delivered world-class results in their various athletic endeavors. Here are just a few examples.*

### Football One of Few to Play on Opening Saturday

The MTSU football program did a masterful job of managing the pandemic



to start the 2020 season. In fact, the Blue Raiders were involved in one of just six games played on the opening Saturday of the college football season when they traveled to tradition-rich Army on Sept. 5. The game was played on national television.

### Blue Raiders Claim Tourney Win at the Grove

It came down to the final hole in College Grove, but the Blue Raider men's golf team locked up its first team title in the seven-year history of the Intercollegiate at The Grove with a team score of 3-under par. Importantly, on the eve of the tournament, MT Athletics officially unveiled a new golf practice facility now under construction at the Blue Raiders' home course in nearby Williamson County. The new \$1 million facility—built in partnership with and located at The Grove Club—opens early this year. Synthetic turf used in all practice areas will be installed by Goat Turf, located in Murfreesboro and owned by Blue Raider baseball alum Tyler Burnett, while construction is being completed by Shane McFarland Construction.



### 2020 Hall of Fame Class Inducted Virtually

The 2020 Blue Raider Hall of Fame inductions were presented with a slightly different twist than in previous years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's outstanding six-person class was enshrined during a virtual induction, with the members being showcased

during a broadcast. Fans could watch on a number of platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The 2020 class comprised Bryce Brentz (baseball), Alysha Clark (basketball), Mike Harmon (golf), Kendall Newson (football), Clay Snellgrove (baseball), and Heather Prater Warren (basketball).

### Blue Raider Women Win Second Straight Cross Country Title

The MTSU women's cross country team repeated as conference champions and captured the program's third overall title at the 2020 Conference USA Championships. Joice Jebor, a two-time all-conference selection in cross country, led the Blue Raider women. All five runners received All-Conference nods. Eusila Chepkemei was also named Outstanding Senior, and Keith Vroman was named Coach of the Year.

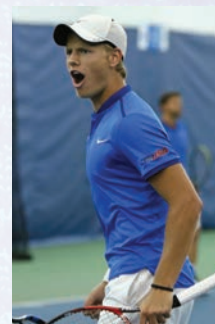


### Lady Raiders Picked to Win C-USA; Hayes Sisters Honored

Anastasia and Aislynn Hayes made quite an impact on Conference USA in their first season on the MTSU women's

basketball team in 2019–20. Last fall Anastasia was named C-USA Preseason Co-Player of the Year, and Aislynn was voted to the C-USA Preseason team in a vote of league coaches. Additionally, league coaches pegged MTSU as the

preseason favorite to win the conference championship in 2021.



### Moonen Named Athlete of the Month

For the third time in program history, a student-athlete from MTSU's tennis team was named the Conference USA Athlete of

the Month. Tom Moonen claimed the honor for October 2020 after going an impressive 8-1 in singles and 6-2 in doubles over three hidden-dual tournaments. With his combined 14 wins, Moonen inched his way further up the record book to No. 8 all-time in combined wins. He now has 156 total wins in his prestigious career.

### Grate Earns First Team All-C-USA Honors

Conference USA announced its 2020 football all-conference award winners on Dec. 21, as voted on by the league's head football coaches, and the Blue Raiders had five players honored. Safety Greg Grate earned first-team honors, while quarterback Asher O'Hara was named to the second team. Offensive lineman Robert Jones, wide receiver Jarrin Pierce, and long snapper Brody Butler were selected for honorable mention.



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## BUDGET AND SALARY

The University made an early decision to not increase tuition and fees for the 2020–21 academic year to help lessen the burden on our students and their families from the pandemic.

No increase in tuition and fee revenue, coupled with no new appropriation funding included in the final governor's budget for 2020–21, caused the University to make reallocations in existing budgets to fund its fixed costs, including the following:

- faculty promotions
- increased cost of software maintenance agreements
- increased scholarship levels
- funding for new academic startup programs

Looking toward the 2021–22 fiscal year, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is recommending operating state appropriations of \$107.5 million for MTSU. This is a **\$1 million increase, or 0.9%, over 2020–21 appropriations**. Funding for any 2021–22 salary increases is not included in these figures and will not be known until the release of the governor's budget proposal in late January or early February.

The MTSU request for a new Applied Engineering Building is the top new project on THEC's new capital project list and proposed for funding in 2021–22, behind two capital projects held over from last year.

The commission also voted to recommend **\$10 million in capital maintenance funds for MTSU projects**, which includes



campuswide utilities improvements, campuswide life safety systems upgrades, Science Building HVAC and exhaust system upgrades, Cope Administration Building and Tennessee Livestock Center roof replacements, elevator modernization, and College Heights electrical upgrades.

THEC's recommendations have been submitted to the Department of Finance and Administration for consideration in the proposed state budget that Gov. Bill Lee will submit to the state legislature. At that point, we will have more information regarding our likely 2021–22 state and capital appropriations.

## CONCLUSION

With our faculty, students, and staff working together to find creative solutions, we embrace the challenges facing higher education and chart new ways of propelling ourselves to reach MTSU's potential. We are truly blessed to give back through our work and mission in so many meaningful ways! I thank each member of our faculty, staff, and administration for being a part of this important work, for choosing to make a difference in the lives of others, and for choosing MTSU as your University. I thank you for your passion and True Blue commitment as we begin a new academic year and forge MTSU's bright path ahead!

MTSU

