

SGA Resolution 14-14-S

A resolution to establish a “town hall” public forum to discuss changing the name of Middle Tennessee State University to The University of Middle Tennessee

Whereas: The University's brand and image is not synonymous or cooperative with the University's most public face, the athletic department;

Whereas: The MTSU Athletic Department, and all underlying sports, clubs, departments, and personnel, refuse to be branded by "MTSU", "MTS", or in conjunction of any mention of the word "State", such as with "Middle Tennessee State University" or "Middle Tennessee State", and have prohibited Conference USA and all partnered media outlets from using such nomenclature in reference to MTSU Athletics, though loosely enforced, in favor of "Middle Tennessee" or "MT";

Whereas: Three universities in the State of Tennessee, all also under the Tennessee Board of Regents of State Universities and Community Colleges (the "TBR"), have names ending with, or being "Tennessee State University";

Whereas: National and local media confusion, in addition to confusion by employers outside the State of Tennessee, with Tennessee State University (TSU) in Nashville, TSU Athletics, crime on the TSU campus, and recent scandals and organizational issues under the TSU administration continues to plague the image and perception of MTSU, potentially harming enrollment, funds, and current and future graduates' career opportunities;

Whereas: Research and studies by multiple third parties have concluded that universities all over the world that underwent a major name change and/or rebranding efforts, including state universities in the United States with similar enrollment, demographics, and institutional bodies to MTSU, saw increased national recognition and prestige, endowment contributions, athletic attendance and performance, student involvement, and graduate success;

Whereas: In 2012, Middle Tennessee State University had the second highest graduation rate out of all TBR institutions to Tennessee Technological University, the highest enrollment, the highest number of degrees granted, and the highest concentration

of non-traditional students, and managed to accomplish its academic success with the lowest per-student funding from the TBR;

Whereas: Rebranding efforts and costs for MTSU Athletics and portions of the university would be marginal given the adoption of the "MT" slant block letters as a primary logo in 1999, and the use of "Middle Tennessee" as a primary means of athletic identification;

Whereas: The topic of the university name change has repeatedly been brought up with little discussion opportunity for the MTSU community, the City of Murfreesboro, and the greater Middle Tennessee community;

Whereas: The 72nd Congress of the Student Government Association previously passed a resolution on a 41-6 vote to change the name of the University to an unspecified name, with intents resembling the intent of this resolution.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED IN THE 76th CONGRESS OF THE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY THAT:

Section 1: MTSU shall consider opening a public forum to be held by the end of 2014 to discuss changing the name of the University to The University of Middle Tennessee.

Section 2: MTSU shall invite to panel this forum: University President Dr. Sydney A. McPhee, University Provost Dr. Brad Bartel, Tennessee Board of Regents Chancellor John Morgan, Tennessee Higher Education Commission Executive Director Richard G. Rhoda, University Vice President for Marketing and Communications Andrew Oppmann, University Director of Athletics Chris Massaro, University Associate Athletic Director Marco Born, and Blue Raider Athletic Association Associate Director Alan Farley.

Section 3: MTSU shall invite to attend this forum: current students, alumni, and faculty of MTSU, contributors to the Blue Raider Athletic Association, the Daily News Journal, The Murfreesboro Post, The Tennessean, ABC Affiliate WKRN, NBC Affiliate WSMV, CBS Affiliate WTVF, FOX Affiliate WZTV, and citizens of the City of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County.

Section 4: MTSU shall advertise this forum three weeks prior to the forum taking place on the website home page, in the Daily News Journal, and in The Murfreesboro Post.

Sponsored by: Senator Tim Williams

Co-Sponsored by: Senator Dylan Bogle
Senator Matthew Crabtree
Senator Matthew Knight

Speaker of the Senate

SGA President

VP of Student Affairs