



**Fall Faculty Meeting
Thursday, August 24, 2017
10 a.m., Tucker Theatre**

Dr. Sidney A. McPhee, President

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Welcome to the beginning of an exciting and challenging new academic year.

I wish to offer special greetings to members of the Middle Tennessee State University Board of Trustees, faculty and staff, employees and our invited guests.

This is the 17th time I have been privileged to address my colleagues and deliver to you my report on the State of the University.

I consider this to be not only my duty, but also my great honor, as your president.

It is difficult to narrow down the many achievements that deserve to be mentioned in this address.

I could speak for hours on the many accomplishments that we, together, have achieved during the past academic year.

But, as tempting as that might be, I won't.

Before I begin my remarks, I'd like to introduce my senior executive team.

They are my key advisers and, as I have said on many occasions, I consider myself blessed to have such hard-working team of executives who have contributed to the progress and success of our university.

First, ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to announce today that I will recommend to our Board of Trustees the appointment of Dr. **Mark Byrnes** for the permanent post of **provost and chief academic officer**.

Provost Byrnes has served as interim provost since April 2016.

He is a graduate of our university and, in 1991, joined the College of Liberal Arts faculty.

He was named dean of the college in 2010.

Let's give Dr. Byrnes a round of applause!

Next, our vice presidents and key executives:

- Mr. **Andrew Oppmann**, vice president for marketing and communications;
- Mr. **Bruce Petryshak**, vice president for information technology and chief information officer;
- Dr. **Deb Sells**, vice president for student affairs and vice provost for enrollment and academic services;
- Mr. **Alan Thomas**, vice president for business and finance;
- Mrs. **Pat Branam**, director of development, representing Mr. **Joe Bales**, vice president for university advancement;
- Ms. **Heidi Zimmerman**, university counsel and secretary to the Board of Trustees;
- and Mrs. **Kimberly Edgar**, executive assistant to the president and our chief of staff.

Please join me in expressing appreciation to this dedicated team of campus leaders.

Next, I would like to take a moment to recognize other members of the President's Cabinet.

Before I ask the entire group to stand, I would like to give special recognition to two individuals who have been added to our cabinet membership since last year:

- Dr. **Joey Gray**, Faculty Senate president for 2017-18 and professor of leisure, sport and tourism. She is with us on the stage today.
- Ms. **Courtney Brandon**, Student Government Association president for 2017-18.

Please join me in thanking these individuals for their service and leadership.

Next, I would like to introduce our deans, who are also on stage with us today.

- Ms. **Bonnie Allen**, dean, Walker Library;
- Dr. **David Butler**, dean, College of Graduate Studies, and vice provost for research;
- Dr. **Robert Fischer**, dean, College of Basic and Applied Sciences;
- Dr. **Karen Petersen**, interim dean, College of Liberal Arts;
- Mr. **Kenneth Paulson**, dean, College of Media and Entertainment;
- Dr. **Lana Seivers**, dean, College of Education;
- Dr. **Rick Sluder**, dean, University College, and vice provost for student success;
- Dr. **David Urban**, dean, Jennings A. Jones College of Business;
- Dr. **John Vile**, dean, University Honors College;
- and Dr. **Harold Whiteside**, dean, College of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

Please give our deans a round of applause!

It is now my honor, ladies and gentlemen, to acknowledge and welcome members of our new Board of Trustees, the newly appointed governing body of our institution.

With us today are:

- Mr. **Steve Smith**, our board chairman;
- and our faculty trustee, Dr. **Tony Johnston**.

Please give our trustees a round of applause!

We also have some other very special guests with us today.

From the Tennessee General Assembly:

- State Sen. **Bill Ketron** – 13th District;
- State Sen. **Jim Tracy** – 16th District;
- State Rep. **Bryan Terry** – 48th District;
- State Rep. **Mike Sparks** – 49th District;
- State Rep. **Tim Rudd** – 34th District;
- and State Rep. **Dawn White** – 37th District.

I am pleased to recognize from our local government:

- the mayor of Rutherford County, the Honorable **Ernest Burgess**;
- and the mayor of Murfreesboro, the Honorable **Shane McFarland**.

Also with us on the stage today is Mr. **Ron Nichols**, vice president of the MTSU Foundation Board.

Will you join me in welcoming our special guests and thanking them for being here today?

A New Era

It seems like everywhere I go these days, the No. 1 question I am asked is, “How significant is the new governing board structure at MTSU?”

I think it is fair to say that the creation of the new board and our newfound independence as an institution is the second most important event behind our founding in the history of the university in 1911.

It represents a new era for the university.

Our 10-member board was established as a result of the FOCUS Act passed by the Tennessee General Assembly in January.

The legislation was championed by Gov. Bill Haslam last year.

The law established local independent governing boards for MTSU and the other five former Tennessee Board of Regents universities.

Formal oversight of MTSU shifted from the TBR to the local independent Board of Trustees in April.

We are fortunate to have an outstanding group of men and women selected as board members, many of whom have some history and experience with our campus.

The majority of the board members are alumni, as well as representatives of some of the state's leading businesses who have been supporters of our university for many years.

They know our university and understand the important role MTSU plays in educating Tennesseans and they have a sense of what MTSU can become.

As we move forward with this new form of governance, and as our board gains an even better understanding of our great institution, I believe you will see them begin to help shape our mission and identify new opportunities that will complement the quality programs and activities we have on our campus.

I'd like our trustees with us today to again stand so we may thank them for their service to our university.

Academic Affairs Update

Today, I simply do not have enough time to present the all accolades and achievements that have occurred since we last met.

Therefore, I will offer up just a few examples of the remarkable work we are performing on our campus.

First, as you know, the **Southern Association for Colleges and Schools – Commission on Colleges** review to consider reaffirmation of our accreditation represents a critical benchmark in the life of this university, as it independently validates every 10 years that our institution is providing a high-quality academic experience for our students that meets the most rigorous standards.

We received reaccreditation after the Commission on Colleges reviewed the university's Compliance Audit Report and its Quality Enhancement Plan, MT Engage.

The review examined MTSU's academic programs, policies, and operating procedures against standards based on best practices in higher education.

The university was found in compliance with both the audit standards and the Quality Enhancement Plan by the on-site peer review team that visited the campus as part of the two-year-long review process.

A finding of compliance with every standard, including those related to the QEP, is rare among institutions that go through this review process.

This accomplishment reaffirms the university's quality endeavors by its peers and recognizes its commitment to the highest standards.

Thank you to Ms. **Faye Johnson**, our SACSCOC liaison, for her outstanding leadership.

Several new degree programs have been developed and will be offered beginning this fall semester.

They include:

- Bachelor of Science in Fermentation Science;
- Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Religious Studies;
- Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science in Africana Studies;
- Bachelor of Science in Dance;

- Bachelor of Science in Audio Production, from an existing concentration;
- Bachelor of Science in Journalism, from an existing concentration;
- Bachelor of Science in Video and Film Production, from an existing concentration.

Two of our existing degrees have been extended to online delivery, including our Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice and our Master of Science in Criminal Justice.

Each of our colleges and academic units continue to maintain a high level of activity and produce news worth bragging about.

Here are just a few examples.

The College of Basic and Applied Sciences rebranded our dairy operations at the **MTSU Creamery** and now offers bottled MTSU Milk for sale on campus and in select community business locations.

- The college is also spearheading a **memorandum of agreement between MTSU and Meharry Medical College** to develop an innovative, accelerated pathway degree program for talented students to graduate as physicians to serve in rural areas of the state.

The College of Behavioral and Health Sciences will celebrate the 50th year of service for the **Speech-Language-Hearing Clinic**, our training ground for students majoring in speech-language pathology and audiology.

The clinic is moving into a newly renovated and designed space at Alumni Memorial Gym, thanks to a quarter-million dollar grant from the Christy-Houston Foundation.

- Also of note in this diverse college, the Tennessee Highway Patrol now uses an interview process for new cadets that was designed by MTSU's **Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness**. The first class of cadets selected in this new process graduated in June.

The Jones College of Business received the prestigious Dale Carnegie Global Leadership Award, an elite recognition that includes many Fortune 500 corporations.

- MTSU ranked as the No. 17 university for aspiring entrepreneurs by a national online site for the innovative work by the College of Business.

MTSU was the top Tennessee university on the list, outranking schools such as Duke, USC and Johns Hopkins.

The College of Education achieved accreditation through 2022 – a significant milestone!

In addition, the college reached two important metrics in the area of public service:

- Its **Home and Community Based Early Intervention Program** has served 602 families in almost 38,000 home visits and has garnered \$6 million in external grant funding.

- Its **Center for Counseling and Psychological Services** has conducted more than 2,000 sessions, serving approximately 250 clients, partnering with community nonprofit organizations and local schools to provide counseling services.

The Honors College produced a **Goldwater Scholarship** winner, **Kirsten Cunningham**, a biochemistry major.

- Six students also received Research Experiences for Undergraduates awards from the **National Science Foundation**.

The College of Liberal Arts established the **Department of Global Studies and Human Geography** with interim chair **David Carleton**.

- In a joint effort by Dr. **Louis Kyriakoudes**, director of the **Albert Gore Research Center**, and Dr. **Kris McCusker**, professor of history, MTSU won a nationwide competition to become the new home for the national headquarters of

the **Oral History Association**.

Locating the association's national headquarters at MTSU allows us to showcase the multidisciplinary efforts in oral history occurring on campus and serve as the premiere resource for researchers working in the field.

- CLA Adviser **Matthew Hibdon** received a national award for excellence in advising by one of the top organizations in the field of student success.
- Dr. **Hugh Berryman** is leading a multi-disciplinary team, funded by the Tennessee War Commission, examining the remains of the Mexican War Dead at Dover Air Force base.

Dr. Berryman and a group of faculty and administrators from MTSU attended the Solemn Movement ceremony in Dover last fall, marking the return of these fallen U.S. soldiers 170 years after they gave their lives in service to the United States.

- And following both state and regional debate titles, **MTSU Debate** brought home its second National Championship title in three years in the International Public Debate Association.

The College of Media and Entertainment's Department of Recording Industry Audio Engineering Program ranked No. 1 in a list of the Best 25 Audio Engineering Schools in the United States by *Audio Assemble*.

- And, for the third year in a row, the college was ranked No. 18 among the top 25 music schools in the nation by *The Hollywood Reporter*.
- Also, the **Animation Program** in the newly renamed **Department of Media Arts** ranked No. 33 nationally by *Animation Career Review* in its Top 50 Public Animation Schools and Colleges in the U.S. for 2017.

The University College will celebrate two big anniversaries this fall:

- **MTSU Online** celebrates its 20th anniversary. In June, it earned the **Online Learning Consortium Exemplary Endorsement**, representing excellence in the administration of online programs. Only four other institutions in the country have earned this distinction.

- MTSU's **Adult Degree Completion Program** also will celebrate its 10th year of highly successful operations. Since its inception, MTSU has become Tennessee's leading producer of adult degree recipients.

The Walker Library established its **Makerspace** service, a first among Tennessee academic libraries. Part of the library's Digital Media Studio, this unique area enables students to design and construct prototypes of projects.

And last but not least, from the **College of Graduate Studies and Research**:

- As all of you well know, increasing graduate student enrollment:
 - helps strengthen MTSU's position as a publicly funded research university;

- enhances MTSU's reputation as a research institution from both faculty and students' points of view;
 - and meets market need for a more educated workforce in Tennessee, within the region and nation.
- During fiscal year 2017, **MTSU faculty and administrators received 59 new grants and contracts** for externally funded research, service, and instructional activity, **with a cumulative lifetime award value of almost \$10 million.**

Our **total portfolio value for all 187 awards** that were active during fiscal year 2017 **was almost \$32 million.**

Just one example is a project by Dr. **Joan McRae**, professor of foreign languages, titled "Graduate Assistantships in Areas of National Need: Fellows for Foreign Language and Literatures," for \$443,000 through the U.S. Department of Education.

The main objective of this project is to increase the

number of high-quality teachers of foreign languages in Tennessee and contiguous states.

Student Success

Ladies and gentlemen, our focus, collectively as a university, continues to be on student success and ensuring that every MTSU student gets the attention each one deserves on the path to earning a degree.

Our excellent MTSU faculty is the key to this effort!

We have made significant progress in the areas of retention and student progression over the past few years.

Indeed, your university has gained national notice from a variety of publications and industry groups as being among the best and most innovative in this effort.

In the last year, representatives from the Lumina Foundation, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Community College Resource Center at Columbia University, among others, have visited MTSU to study our efforts and results.

Here are some of the latest updates on our collective student success efforts:

- Last summer, a record 312 students participated in our **Scholars Academy**, a two-week summer bridge, early-arrival program designed to enhance the success of at-risk students.

The average retention rate for MTSU students who went through the Scholars Academy is 83 percent, well above that for other students at our university.

- **Free tutoring** was available during the Fall 2016 semester for more than 200 courses, a new record level of support here at MTSU.
 - More importantly, many of our students are spending more hours in tutoring sessions — almost 9,000

hours last fall.

- In the Spring 2017 semester, the total sessions increased by an astounding 64 percent.
- We also implemented a **Supplemental Instruction pilot program** starting with the Fall 2016 semester.

The program provides students enrolled in some of MTSU's most challenging courses with additional instructional support.

This involved 21 course sections, across three colleges, and served more than 1,500 students.

The program is already showing very promising results.

- And finally, MTSU's **REBOUND program** has been nationally recognized as a "model of excellence" for its work to "re-position" freshmen who conclude the first semester with less than a 2.0 GPA.

Students who participate in the program retain at significantly higher levels than students who do not.

Student Affairs

Our **Division of Student Affairs** continues to provide great support to our mission.

Our admissions staff works tirelessly to attract the best students.

Indeed, while our final census numbers for this fall won't be ready for a few more days, I am happy to report that we are seeing an increase in first-time freshmen, new transfers, international students and graduate students.

And this year, while our freshman numbers are still being calculated, we appear to be on track to exceed the national

ACT average. In fact, we are poised to set a new record ACT score at MTSU.

This past year, the admissions staff traveled more than 64,000 miles to “**take MTSU**” into the communities and hometowns of prospective students and their families.

Our “True Blue Tours” are the highlight of our recruitment events.

Last year we added the city of Louisville to our now 11-city tour.

Faculty, advisers, deans, administrators, and student leaders traveled to these tour stops to present information about admissions, scholarships, financial aid, and academic programs to nearly 3,000 prospective students and family members.

As the Fall 2017 semester begins, the admissions department has already begun their efforts to attract students for Fall 2018.

During this year's True Blue Tours, we will host prospective students and their families as well as high school and community college counselors:

- In Tennessee, we will visit Williamson County, Chattanooga, Johnson City, Knoxville, Nashville, Memphis, and Jackson.
- We will go north to Kentucky, visiting Bowling Green and Louisville.
- We will go south to Georgia, visiting Atlanta.
- And we will also go to Alabama, including a stop in Huntsville, ***and we are adding Birmingham to our list.***

Let's recognize Vice President **Deb Sells**; Ms. **Linda Olsen**, our director of undergraduate admissions; and all of our recruiters and admissions team for their outstanding efforts.

Ripple Effect

Colleagues, I want you to know that you work for a university that is growing in prominence and having impact in this region.

I want to bring your attention to the recent study on the university economic impact by MTSU's **Business and Economic Research Center** in the Jones College of Business.

According to the report:

- MTSU is responsible for about 8,400 jobs across the state, which generates \$1.12 billion in revenues and over \$408 million in wages and salaries;
- MTSU is Murfreesboro's second-largest employer, responsible for generating \$88 million in local, state, and federal tax revenue;
- Spending by our students alone accounts for more than \$300 million and more than 1,800 jobs;

- 90 percent of MTSU students are from Tennessee and 78 percent of MTSU alumni live in Tennessee.

This means that we are more than fulfilling our mission to educate Tennesseans and, even better, most of those we educate stay in Tennessee.

This is clear evidence that your university is a major driver in the success and progress enjoyed not only by Murfreesboro and Rutherford County, but all of the Nashville area and our great state.

Much of who we are now, and what we want to become as a city and county in the future, depends upon the continued health and prosperity of your university.

I hope each and every one of you appreciates the vast and significant economic impact that our student population brings to the local economy.

Construction Update

Our campus is dynamic and ever-changing! Here's a quick briefing on some of the major projects on the horizon.

- A new **Fermentation Lab**, serving the new **Fermentation Science Program**, is nearing completion with the installation of needed equipment.

Six classes will begin the spring 2018 semester.

- The finance committee of our Board of Trustees authorized us to pursue plans for a **new building for the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences**. Design work is well underway, and we want this building to be located in the campus core, east of the McFarland Building.

The new, three-story building will contain flexible classrooms and labs serving the psychology, criminal justice, and social work departments.

A capital request for outlay funding of the construction will be submitted this year in anticipation of funding in fiscal year 2018-19.

- Long-range facilities planning continues for Math and Computer Sciences, Engineering Technology, and Concrete and Construction Management to further develop the master plan for these future projects.

- Meanwhile, the reconstruction of **Middle Tennessee Boulevard** has reached the halfway point in the three-year project.

Lane paving, sidewalks, and new traffic signals can be seen between East Main Street and Bell Street.

- The work will continue north to the Greenland Drive intersection and, when completed in December 2018, will form a beautiful, tree-lined entry on the western end of campus.

Budget and Salary Overview

Shifting gears now to the topic of our university budget: I remain deeply concerned about the university budget challenges, particularly the growing disparity in our faculty and staff salaries in relation to our peer institutions.

Please know that we continue to examine strategies to address this issue.

As part of our efforts to address this priority, I am pleased that we were able to provide a 3 percent cost of living adjustment for most employees.

Each eligible employee received an increase equal to 3 percent of his or her July 1, 2017 salary or \$1,000, whichever is greater.

Faculty increases were effective August 1.

As you may know, our primary sources of revenue are through state appropriation and tuition dollars generated by enrollment. Our hard work to recruit and retain more students has stabilized our tuition revenue. However, in order to cover salary increases and other rising expenses, it was also necessary to raise our tuition and fees by 3.9 percent.

The increase in tuition and fees was also needed to cover:

- inflationary expense and utility costs;
- funds for faculty promotion and salary increases;
- and resources for new student facilities, technology, and tools necessary for our Student Success Initiative.

However, the increase in tuition and fees did not fully cover our increases in salaries and other expenses.

The balance will be addressed by reallocating our existing budget resources.

This will again require tough choices to ensure our continued success.

Our historic and continuing decline in state support dictates that we remain focused in fiscal management, which we have done, and done well, I might add, for the last 15 years.

Because of our vigilance and sound management practices, we remain the state's most efficient producer of university graduates, helping more students reach their educational goals for fewer tax dollars per pupil from the state.

University Advancement

Our ongoing budget challenges makes philanthropy even more vital to the progress of our university.

I am happy to report that our fundraising efforts this past year were up nearly \$1 million over the previous year.

Indeed, private gifts to the university have a transformative effect on programs and students across campus.

In this vein, I am happy to report that a **new institute opening this fall at MTSU** is a result of a generous gift to the university.

This institute will allow students to follow in the academic footsteps of the late MTSU graduate and Nobel laureate James Buchanan by exploring the impact of public policy on the economy.

- The **Political Economy Research Institute**, a joint venture between the **Jennings A. Jones College of Business** and the **University Honors College**, will be funded by a \$3.5 million, four-year start-up grant from the

Charles Koch Foundation.

- The direction and management of this new institute rests with our academic administrators: the deans of these two colleges. They alone will hire a director who will follow the course they chart.

Also, in 2016, the Division of University Advancement established a new office to foster and strengthen relationships with the business community.

In the past 16 months, **Paula Mansfield**, our director of corporate outreach, established relationships with 65 companies.

In turn, each of our undergraduate colleges has been introduced to at least one new relevant company during the past 12 months.

Not only are Paula's efforts important to strengthen our town-and-gown relationships, her work also will help us forge new partnerships and ties to businesses and industries. This could

lead to new sources of revenue and new opportunities for our students and faculty.

ATHLETICS

Now, let's turn our attention to Blue Raider intercollegiate athletics for a moment.

There are many great statistics being produced by our student-athletes on the fields of play. These are the stories that you have read in the sports section of the newspaper or heard on TV.

So today, I will share my favorite statistics: the ones they are producing in the classroom:

- Each of Middle Tennessee's 17 athletic teams has earned **a multi-year Academic Progress Rate of over 930** once again, as reported in the most recent National Collegiate Athletic Association annual report.
- Only six teams who advanced in this year's men's NCAA basketball tournament had a **100 percent graduation rate: MTSU**, Duke, Villanova, Notre Dame, Kansas and Butler.

- Football's impressive multi-year APR score of 983 equaled the second-best score in Conference USA and the state of Tennessee.
- 55 percent of our student-athletes had a grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- 33 percent of our student-athletes made the Dean's List by earning a grade point average of 3.5 or higher.
- 14 percent of our student-athletes had a perfect 4.0 grade point average.
- Ten of 15 teams had a semester grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- Men's tennis had the highest men's team grade point average with a 3.743.
- And volleyball had the highest women's and overall team grade point average of 3.689.

CLOSING

Ladies and gentlemen, your university remains:

- the No. 1 producer of graduates for the Greater Nashville region and economy;
- a vital contributor toward the Drive to 55, the governor's goal of helping 55 percent of Tennesseans obtaining a college degree or certificate by the year 2025.
- the No. 1 choice of Tennessee's transfer students;
- the No. 1 destination in Tennessee for international students;
- and the No. 1 choice of students 25 years and older.

We are a nationally recognized leader in helping our students reach their goals through our:

- exceptional teaching;
- outstanding academic programs;
- and life-changing opportunities in our classrooms, at our laboratories and on our playing fields.

To our new faculty members, welcome, again.

I hope you share my pride in all that we have done to make our university vital and successful.

And I urge you to quickly learn about your college's student success initiatives and figure out what you can do to help.

Finally, I couldn't go without mentioning Monday's **Great Tennessee Eclipse at MTSU!!!**

We welcomed almost 10,000 visitors to campus for this amazing event, which featured a nationally televised science show on a stage and shown on big screens in front of our new Science Building.

And, due to the awesome job of our planning team, NASA designated MTSU as an official viewing site. We were one of only six in the Nashville area to earn this endorsement.

I want to take just a moment to recognize those who spent months planning and organizing this successful event:

- First, of course, our provost, Dr. **Mark Byrnes**;
- the dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, Dr. **Bud Fischer**;
- the chair of the Department of Physics and Astronomy, Dr. **Ron Henderson**, along with professors **Chuck Higgins** and **John Wallin** and the students and faculty in the entire department:
- Faculty, students and staff from our College of Media and Entertainment and College of Education for their key assistance;
- And finally, the dedicated team drawn from across all departments who made this possible, particularly the Division of Marketing and Communications, under the direction of vice president Andrew Oppmann.

Now, to everyone here today, I again ask each of you to remember that:

- no matter what you do,
- as a member of the faculty, staff or administration,
- **all of us are responsible for the success of our students.**

And I hope you will always remain **TRUE BLUE.**