

**Remarks from
MSTU President Sidney A. McPhee,
Fall Faculty Meeting,
Aug. 26, 2011,
Tucker Theatre**

Good morning. As always, I am delighted to welcome each of you to our annual Fall Faculty Meeting.

I have always approached the beginning of a new academic year with tremendous anticipation. That sense is heightened as I reflect upon the prospects ahead for this year, for the centennial of our founding is just days away and, with it, the beginning of a yearlong celebration of our remarkable University's history and its future.

Birthdays are often a time of reflection and celebration. So, as we approach this important milestone together, I am pleased to be among the first to welcome back returning faculty and extend warm greetings to our newest faculty members. Today, I also look forward to updating you on how our university is

- building upon its strong reputation as an academic trendsetter;
- providing a productive, challenging environment for student learning; and
- continuing as a great workplace for faculty and staff.

Forgive me for being nostalgic; this is, after all, the eve of our centennial and the beginning of my 11th year as president of this great university.

I have always enjoyed setting the tone for this event—and, in a larger sense, the year ahead of us—with a traditional declaration that “these are EXCITING times for the University.”

You may recall in 2009, as we began to emerge from our efforts to reposition the University amidst significant budget challenges, I declared these to be “exceptionally exciting times.”

Perhaps that was an understatement!

This year, I say that these are “exciting and historic” times for our University, not only because it is our 100th birthday, but also because we are entering our second century with strong momentum, great promise and enormous potential.

But before I go any further, let me take a few moments to recognize some individuals who are extremely important to this institution and are invaluable to me in working to ensure the successful management and operation of this University.

Let me begin by introducing my executive team, a group of outstanding individuals who serve as my key advisors and are involved in much of the overall decision-making on our campus:

- Mr. John Cothorn, senior vice president;
- Dr. Brad Bartel, University provost;
- Mr. Joe Bales, vice president for development and university relations;
- 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; and
- Kimberly Edgar, executive assistant to the president.

These individuals are doing an outstanding job on behalf of our University.

I would also 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:

- Professor Kim Neal Nofsinger, Faculty Senate president for 2011-12 and professor and director of dance in the College of Liberal Arts; and
- Mr. Andrew Oppmann, associate vice president for marketing and communications.

We also have some other very special guests with us that I would like to recognize. From the Tennessee General Assembly:

- State Sen. Bill Ketron of the 13th District;
- State Rep. Joe Carr of the 48th District;
- State Rep. Mike Sparks of the 49th District; and
- State Rep. Rick Womick of the 34th District.

Also with us is Ms. Murray Martin, president of the MTSU Foundation Board of Trustees.

I'd now like to share with you a brief overview of our accomplishments in the last academic year. Over the summer, I had a chance to reflect on the tremendous work put forward by the entire University community, in service to the state of Tennessee and beyond. It is abundantly clear to me that we make a positive difference in many lives and at many levels.

I want to take a few minutes to acknowledge some members of the University community who have enhanced the reputation and standing of our institution. We enjoyed many significant accomplishments in the past year and the few I will highlight represent only a small percentage of the diverse and outstanding achievements by our faculty. All of this brings to mind the old saying, "You're not bragging, if it's true."

We are fortunate to be a part of a unique community of learners, working in concert to build a world-class university.

Some of our notable faculty, departmental and college achievements include:

- John Hill, in recording industry, won a Grammy Award for the Best Engineered Album in the classical category;
- Hugh Berryman, the director of the Forensic Institute of Research and Education, was named the 2012 recipient of the Thomas Dale Stewart Award for his lifetime

commitment and contributions to forensic anthropology by the American Association of Forensic Science;

- John Wallin, director of the Ph.D. in Computational Science program, was named a research fellow at Oxford University;
- Leon Alligood, professor in the School of Journalism, received a Dart Center Academic Fellowship at Columbia University; and
- Dr. Albert DePrince of the Department of Economics and Finance won the 2011 MBAA International McGraw Hill Irwin Distinguished Paper Award at the Academy of Finance Meeting.

And over the past year, the College of Education:

- established Professional Learning Communities in seven school districts;
- provided electronic learning center production of more than 20 "Best Practice" workshops for the Tennessee Department of Education;
- expanded the K-12 Distance Learning Network; and
- connected via satellite downlink to 14 local education associations statewide.

Let's recognize Dean Lana Seivers and Dr. Bob Eaker for their work in this area.

In the past year, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, one of the nation's oldest, largest and most influential foundations, restored MTSU to doctoral/research status and recognized the University for curricular engagement, outreach and partnerships. I am very pleased that our hard work in these areas was recognized by Carnegie.

Also, this past year we began three new Ph.D. programs in math and science education, molecular biosciences and computational science.

Our new master's in horse science program, launched this past spring, positions us to be one of the Southeast's premier undergraduate and postgraduate educational programs in the horse industry. It is led by Director Dr. Dave Whitaker, a nationally recognized leader in this field.

We continue to make progress in the area of research and creative activity. The following are just a few examples of important research occurring by brilliant faculty and students on our campus:

- We are helping solve seed-germination riddles across the world;
- we're studying individual cells to unravel the causes of sickle cell anemia;
- we're initiating groundbreaking research on sportsmanship; and
- we are leading the charge in the study of hybrid car components and fuel sources alike.

In addition, our faculty colleagues are engaged in:

- conducting important exercise-science research on restoring movement for paraplegics;
- studying cedar-glades restoration;

- advancing forensic-science methods;
- collaborating on unmanned aircraft research;
- continuing to receive national recognition in concrete engineering and popular music studies; and
- and spearheading research on the leading edge of metabolic engineering.

The master's degree in professional sciences and the Experimental Vehicle Program were both recognized with a Tennessee Board of Regents Academic Excellence Award. This represents the second year in a row that MTSU has been recognized by the board with this honor. Dr. Saeed Foroudastan, professor in the Department of Engineering Technology, accepted the award for the University for both programs.

A new Department of Concrete Industry Management was established, and Dr. Heather Brown was named chair. This is one example of how we are responding to the needs of local and national industry through innovative partnerships and learning opportunities. The program provides students the opportunity to enter a field that has an urgent need for professionals with the skills to meet the growing demands of a progressive, changing concrete industry.

Regarding our efforts in external research funding: We were awarded \$33.4 million in fiscal year 2011. Many of these awards reflect the entrepreneurial spirit of our faculty and staff that is so vital to our growth and progress. Here's a selected list of the grants awarded to our faculty this past year:

- Professor Deborah Belcher, in human sciences, who received a \$1.7 million grant from the Tennessee Department of Education for a Tennessee Collegiate Financial Planning Project;
- Professor Chris McKissack, University College, who received two grants from the Tennessee Department of Education for \$1.97 million for professional development of vocational teachers;
- Professor Preston MacDougal, chemistry, who received nearly \$900,000 in funding from the Department of Energy for computational modeling of drug-resistant bacteria research;
- Professor Hugh Berryman, in forensics, who was awarded a \$625,000 grant from the Department of Justice to expand forensic education;
- Professor Paul Craig, aerospace, who received \$700,000 from the National Aeronautical and Space Administration for the MTSU Center for Research on Aviation Training; and
- Associate Professor Sanjay Asthana, journalism, who received almost \$270,000 grant funding from the Qatar National Research Foundation Grant to help youth in the Middle East.

Now, on matters related to the University's budget:

For the past two years, at this gathering, I've spoken of our hard work and efforts in implementing the series of recommendations outlined in our Positioning the University for the Future initiative. These efforts identified ways to reduce costs and

improve efficiencies while protecting and, in some cases, enhancing selected programs central to our mission and future.

Because we tackled the challenges head-on, and focused on moving the University forward, we entered this new fiscal year fully prepared to address the significant budget reductions without major disruptions to our day-to-day operations.

In addition to the \$31 million reduction from our 2011-12 budget due to the loss of stimulus funds, a 2 percent cut also was made to our budget. This translated into a \$1.7 million reduction for MTSU. That means that since July 1, 2008, our state appropriations have been reduced by approximately \$33 million, or 33 percent of our budget.

As state support dwindles, we continue to face additional inflationary costs, including increased utilities, benefits and supplies that require funding to operate.

We were able to address the major financial reduction by taking a proactive approach through good management and some one-time financial allocations due to the phase-in of a new outcomes-based funding formula by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. As a result, for this new fiscal year, no division of the university will be asked to make any additional cuts beyond those already made.

Also, this past June, the Tennessee Board of Regents approved a 9.8 percent increase in tuition and fees for 2011-12. This tuition and fee increase will:

- replace part of the reduced state appropriations over the last four years;
- help lessen the impact of some of our inflationary costs; and
- cover a pay raise for faculty and staff that was mandated but not fully funded in this year's state budget.

Most importantly, one percent of the tuition and fee increase approved this year was allocated to help the University add back 17 new tenure-track faculty positions. This is the first step toward restoring some of the faculty that were lost in the budget cuts during the past two years. It is our hope that this will also help in reducing the reliance on temporary and adjunct faculty.

As you well know, higher-education employees have worked without cost-of-living increases or general raises for the past three years. I am pleased to report that the Tennessee Board of Regents approved a 3 percent cost-of-living allowance salary increase or \$750, whichever was greater, for regular employees, both full- and part-time, on the payroll as of June 30, 2011. The 3 percent salary increase was effective July 1, 2011, and was included in the 12-month faculty and nonfaculty employees' July salary payment. It will be in the August salary payment for nine-month faculty.

I have also requested approval from the board at its upcoming meeting in September to grant additional salary increases effective Jan. 1, 2012. These additional increases for faculty and staff will be based on approved compensation

plans for faculty and executive employees and minimum market adjustments for classified and professional employees. It should be noted that not everyone will receive an increase as part of this additional pay-plan implementation. Increases will depend on where the employee falls within the compensation plan. Faculty members as a group will receive almost 80 percent of the additional salary enhancement pool.

Further, I have requested approval from the board to give a one-time payment bonus of \$1,000 per full-time employee, pro-rated for part-time employees, who have at least two years of service as of Sept. 30, 2011, and are in active employment status as of Sept. 30, 2011. That payment, if approved, will be paid in October of this year.

In addition, I have requested approval from the board to increase the annual salary of the 33 MTSU employees whose June 30, 2011, salary was below the "three-persons 2009 to 2010 Federal Poverty Guideline of \$18,310" to that amount effective July 1, 2011. Adjustment for any market increase would then be applied.

I am pleased that we are able to give some salary increases to our employees for the first time in more than three years.

These recent actions do not bring us to the level where we should be; it simply helps us to try to address the challenge of maintaining competitive salaries for our faculty and staff.

I now wish to take a few moments during this gathering to acknowledge the accomplishments of our athletics staff and student-athletes, both on and off the field of play.

I hope you saw the news in the local media this past May when our athletics program learned it had won the Sun Belt Conference All-Sports Trophy. This award represents the best all-around athletic program in the conference. MTSU has won this honor seven times since joining the league in 2001 and has secured this title for the last three years in a row. We became the third school in Sun Belt history to win the award seven times. No school has won the award more since the Blue Raiders joined the league in 2000-01.

During the spring 2011 semester, 138 of our 301 student-athletes, or 46 percent, had a grade-point average of 3.0 or higher, while 69 made the Dean's List and 23 had a perfect 4.0.

Several of our athletic teams have earned Public Recognition Awards by the NCAA.

Blue Raider football, men's tennis and men's golf were recognized for the teams scoring in the top 10 percent in the nation in each sport with their Academic Progress Rates scores.

Also, our athletic department was one of seven Sun Belt institutions to place all of their respective sports teams above a 925 on the latest Academic Progress Rate report by the National Collegiate Athletic Association. I'd like to recognize our

football coach, Rick Stockstill, for being named one of the top 10 coaches in America for academic excellence along with universities such as Duke, Northwestern and Georgia Tech.

I also would like to recognize Athletics Director Chris Massaro and his staff, along with our coaches and athletic support personnel, for their dedication to ensuring the continued athletic and academic success of our student-athletes

On the matter of private funding last year, I am proud to report that this was a banner year in private fundraising for our university. Compared to the previous year, giving was up by more than 30 percent. Simply put, this is a remarkable accomplishment. My appreciation and thanks goes to Vice President Joe Bales, Development Director Nick Perlick and our entire University development team for their hard work.

But our work here is not finished. With state and federal funding sources stagnating, we have to:

- take full advantage of opportunities to expand further sources of private giving;
- expand our research and service base; and
- look for entrepreneurial ways to generate revenue while protecting our core academic mission.

Development is not the sole responsibility of the Development Office. It begins on the day our students enroll in our institution and enter into a relationship with our University.

How we handle those students—from advising, to the classroom, from student services, to the residence halls and more—will determine whether that relationship will mature and grow into something they will someday consider valuable enough to reward with their continued support.

We also must be more proactive in reaching out to the local, state and regional business community, looking for ways to build additional innovative, win-win partnerships. These times demand different thinking, and certainly different revenue streams, in order for us to continue the level of services we wish to provide.

With regard to efforts to improve our facilities, I'm proud to report that the new College of Education building is now complete, and it is ready for classes this fall.

Plans are under way to renovate the Learning Resources Center to house the Interior design and textiles, merchandising and design programs and provide needed infrastructure updates. Construction will begin in December and extend through next summer.

Women's basketball offices on the lower level of Murphy Center will be ready by the start of the semester. This project is supported through a \$600,000 gift by alumnus

Ken "Coach" Shipp. In addition, Coach Shipp provided \$400,000 for scholarships to help economically disadvantaged students who want to come to MTSU.

Our new dairy facility at the MTSU Farm is completed. We are the only school in the state where students can get hands-on, practical experience in milk production while learning about food safety, cattle management and quality assurance.

The new Student Union is on schedule and will be ready for occupancy next summer.

Renovation of Deere and Nicks halls is complete and marks the completion of a 10-year, \$77 million renovation master plan.

Construction continues on roadway improvements that will widen and enhance MTSU Boulevard from the roundabout to Jones Hall. This will allow more efficient shuttle-bus service and improved pedestrian walkways, and it will be finished by the spring.

And this fall, a project to improve lighting across campus will be completed.

While there was no state appropriation for new capital construction this year, we continue to lobby aggressively for funding for our new science building. I remain hopeful that our critical need for a new science building will be met. This past spring, the Legislative Joint Ad Hoc Education Finance Committee recommended full funding of the project following a review and recommendation by the state architect, and the project remains as the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's No. 1 capital priority.

We deeply appreciate the hard work and focus by our local legislative delegation in pushing for this project that's so very vital to our mission. Again, I would also like to recognize our local area delegation, along with our government liaison, John Hood, for their efforts during this past legislative session.

Before I conclude my remarks, I do want us to look ahead to the future and reflect upon opportunities before us in the coming academic year.

The implementation of the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 has prompted many changes. Some of these changes include:

- increased focus on student retention;
- degree completion;
- improvement in the areas of transfer and articulation;
- institutional mission distinctiveness; and
- significant changes to the funding formula.

As you may know, one of the many efforts we took in addressing the mandates of the higher-education reform agenda was last year's "creation" of the University College, a coordination of services and functions that enhance opportunities for

student success. Some of those initiatives include the MTSU Total Intake Model, the new Academic Alert program and student- recruitment strategies.

I also wish to draw your attention to the work of our Task Force on Nonviolence and Conflict Resolution. This group, headed by Vice President Deb Sells, was charged with developing a comprehensive and ongoing plan to teach, train and research ways to reinforce positive conflict resolution. It is my desire and goal to promote a campus environment that embraces civility and celebrates diversity. A webpage is being created and will include recommendations and strategies outlined by the task force. This initiative resulted from unfortunate incidents occurring last spring. And please know, I appreciate the good work of this group.

You may also have heard that the University has enacted a tobacco-free campus policy, which means that the use of all forms of tobacco products will be prohibited on University property. We feel this policy is not about denying rights; it's about promoting and creating a healthy environment for all. We are not focusing on tobacco users as much as we are focusing on a behavior in public spaces we all share.

While our new policy technically went into effect July 1, I have asked that full implementation be delayed until Jan. 1, 2012, to allow a period of transition for us to educate the University community about the policy and provide support to those who wish to cease tobacco usage. More information will be coming shortly from our various groups working on this initiative.

And finally, we're in the midst of extensive preparation for the Fifth-Year Accreditation Report for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This is an important process, something I know well as a member of the board of trustees for SACS, and I truly appreciate everyone's attention and focus on this work.

As we reflect upon our century of service, you will often hear me recite three key themes about our University: Pride, Tradition and Excellence. It's hard to capture the essence of such a vital institution like ours in just three words. But I believe they capture the feelings we share about our accomplishments in the century behind us and our focus in the years ahead.

As I have said before, I am extremely proud of our faculty, staff, students and alumni. We make up more than just an academic community; we are a family. And, together, we strive to live up to our tradition of excellence as "Tennessee's Best" comprehensive university.

For the past 100 years, we have provided our students with unique and meaningful opportunities to unlock their intellectual potential, so they may realize the promise in their future.

We remain ...

- the No. 1 choice for undergraduates in the State of Tennessee;
- the No. 1 producer of college graduates in the Greater Nashville region; and

- the second-largest producer of graduates in our state among public universities.

As budgetary concerns magnify the need for wise spending of public monies, I am proud to report that we are also the most efficient producer of graduates among our state's universities, helping more students reach their educational goals for less tax dollars per-pupil from the state.

We have maintained our academic quality and been good stewards of our resources by keeping sight on these three important goals, set forth in our 10-year Academic Master Plan:

- enhancing academic quality;
- promoting a student-centered living and learning environment; and
- leveraging partnerships with business and industry.

As we near the midpoint of this master plan, and as we adapt to our new expectations as outlined by the Complete College Tennessee Act, I will be developing further ways to measure and report how the work by each college, department and administrative unit is contributing to our plan. It is vital that all of us not only embrace this plan; we must also be able to identify tangible results.

I look forward to celebrating our Centennial, starting today and throughout the entire academic year. A terrific team of alumni, friends, students, faculty and staff has worked for months to provide us a wonderful array of events, features and specials that will fill us with even more pride for MTSU.

In conclusion, and as always, I remain extremely proud and humbled to have the privilege of leading this outstanding university. I appreciate your attendance and patience today. I look forward to working with each of you this academic year, and I cannot wait for it to begin, for we have much to cheer about!

Thank you so much!!!