

Aerospace Department
MTSU P.O. Box 67
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132
Office: (615) 898-2788



November 10, 2019

Michelle Frazier, Director
Tennessee Aeronautics Division

Dear Ms. Frazier:

The Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Aerospace Department is committed to continuing its standing as one of a very few accredited university aviation programs in the nation. In order to meet this goal, the expansion of our current facilities is necessary to meet the surging demand of students interested in pursuing pilot, aircraft mechanic, dispatcher, air traffic controller, aviation manager, and UAS operator careers. As part of this expansion effort, the Aerospace Department is currently completing an Airport Campus Master Plan with the consulting firm Ricondo & Associates. This Master Plan includes laying out various maintenance and academic facilities to be built at the Murfreesboro Municipal Airport in the near future.

The first step of the master planning effort was conducting a space and facilities needs assessment. To meet current and future student enrollment numbers, the University is currently formulating a building plan that will include an additional 23,000 square feet of academic space for classrooms, pilot briefing areas, labs, and offices. Another 57,500 square feet of hangar space is needed for the Aircraft Maintenance Management program, along with an additional 25,000 square foot hangar to replace the current MTSU aircraft Part 141 fleet maintenance hangar. The overall anticipated improvements to the MTSU Airport Campus and the Murfreesboro Municipal Airport in terms of academic buildings, hangars, apron expansion, airside parking, and utilities are estimated to cost approximately \$20 million.

The Aerospace Department has experienced an over 23% growth in enrollment this fall over last year, and a 37% growth in enrollment over the last two years. This has resulted in an all-time record current enrollment of over 1,050 students in the Department this year. This ever-increasing demand is anticipated to continue for the foreseeable future. As an example of the expansion necessary to meet this growth, the University flight instructor staff has grown from 30 flight instructors a few years ago to almost 80 today. Five faculty and support staff have been hired over the last two years within the Department to support this growth as well, and new positions are being continuously being approved and searches held to fill these positions

Currently, searches for two faculty positions and an assistant chief position are ongoing. As enrollment continues to increase over the next decade, the University will continue to hire more instructors, faculty, and staff, to meet the demand. Based on forecast enrollment increases in the Aerospace Department for the next decade, 1900 students are projected for the fall semester of 2029, or almost double present-day enrollment. To support this enrollment approximately 70 additional flight instructors will need to be employed, along with 10-12 additional faculty and 5-8 additional staff members. This will bring total employment numbers for the Aerospace Department to 150 flight instructors, 27-29 faculty, and 22-25 staff. Along with the increased faculty and staff we expect our fleet of aircraft will need to expand from 28 aircraft to 50 aircraft by 2029.

In a recent Airport Economic Impact Study, the MTSU Aerospace Department was calculated to account for 144 jobs, \$4.3 million in personal income, \$13.7 million in business revenue, and \$0.7 million in state and local taxes in Rutherford County. It is an economic engine for Murfreesboro and Tennessee attracting students as well as professionals from all over Tennessee, the United States, and several foreign countries. The Aerospace Department is considered a signature program of the University, and both the Department and University upper administration is committed to continuing to meet the demands of the aviation industry now and into the future. This commitment will require considerable expansion of facilities at the Murfreesboro Municipal Airport.

Sincerely,



Wendy Beckman, Ed.D
Aerospace Department Chair