

FOUNDATION

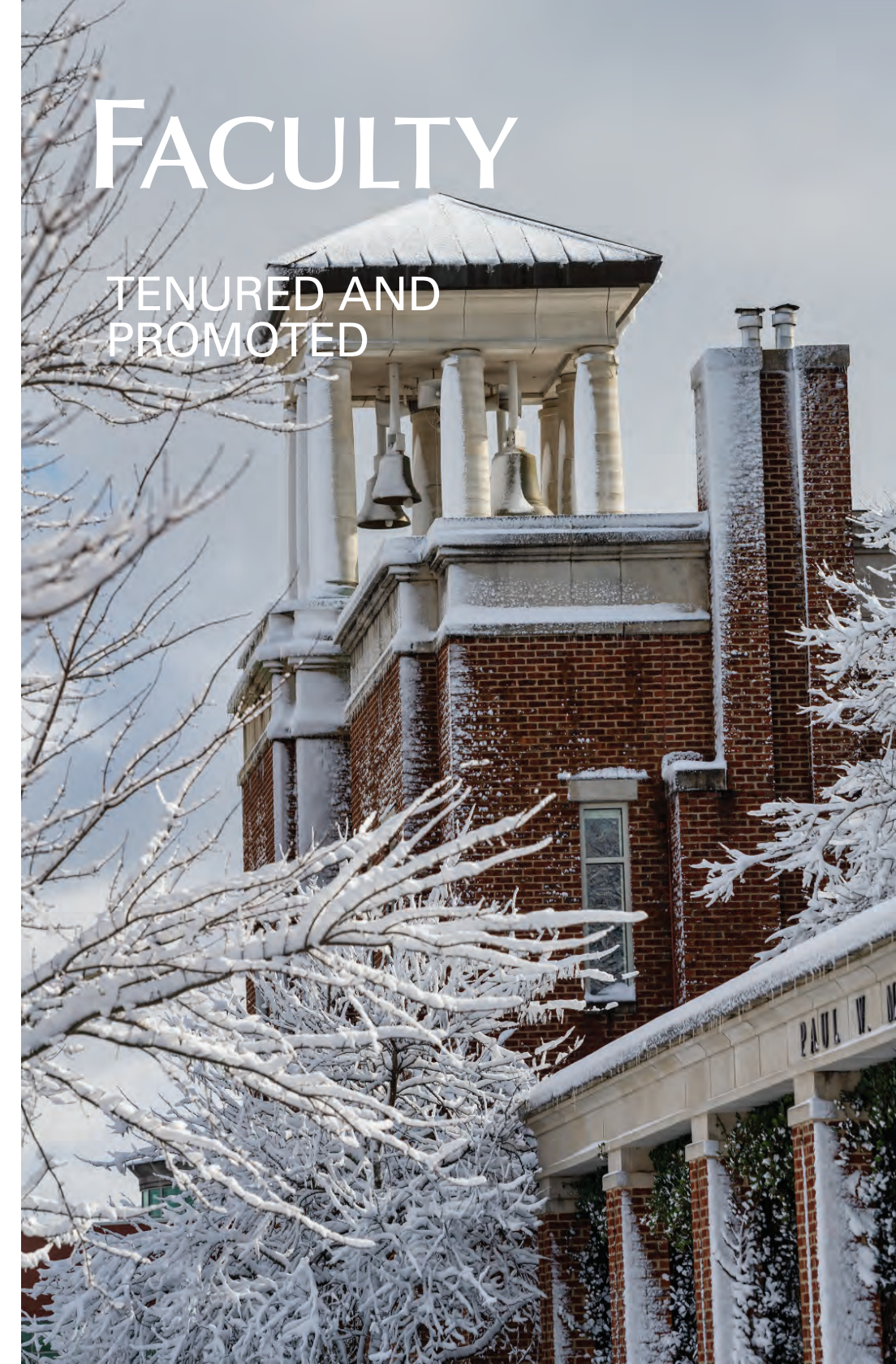
AWARDS

MIDDLE
TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY.

I AM
true
BLUE

FACULTY

TENURED AND
PROMOTED



PAUL W. W.

*T*hrough commitment
to teaching, research, and
professional service, the MTSU
faculty achieves the University's
mission of providing quality
educational programs in a
supportive campus environment.



Jake Avila

*School of Concrete and
Construction Management*

Tenured

Jake Avila possesses more than 20 years of experience in business ownership, management, and real estate in Southern California. Before transitioning to academia, he spent most of his professional career at CA Construction, a family-owned firm specializing in disaster restoration and government contracting. His roles ranged from managing director and executive vice president to general manager and restoration division manager. In these roles, he was responsible for overseeing business operations and construction services and consulting for various stakeholders, including government agencies, homeowners, property managers, law firms, ACE firms (architecture, construction, and engineering), third-party administrators, and major insurance carriers.

As a scholar-practitioner, Avila is dedicated to advancing the work of restoration industry professionals through applied research. His overarching objective is to help disaster restoration firms increase their capacity by advancing the understanding of industry dynamics, improving the design and implementation of best practices, and strengthening the connections between ongoing academic and professional activity within the industry. His recent research has focused on analyzing employee burnout within the restoration industry.

Since 2008, Avila has held teaching and administrative positions in various business, engineering, and construction programs at the graduate and undergraduate levels. Prior to joining MTSU, he served as department chair, director of multiple graduate and undergraduate degree programs, and associate professor at two other institutions.

Avila holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Pepperdine University, a Master of Business Administration from California Baptist University, and a doctorate from the University of Southern California.

He and his wife, Becca, have three children: Jackson, Liv, and Jeremiah. They live in Franklin and love traveling, hiking, fishing, and many other outdoor activities.



Kevin L. Bicker

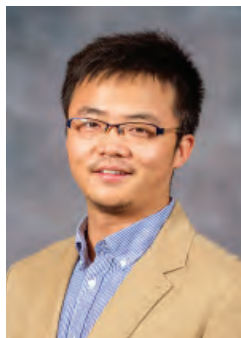
Department of Chemistry

Promoted to Professor

Kevin L. Bicker has a B.S. in Chemistry and Biology from Bluffton University and a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina, where he worked on the development of peptide-based arrays to detect cancer-associated glycoproteins. He completed postdoctoral studies at The Scripps Research Institute in Florida developing inhibitors and chemical probes for the protein arginine deaminase family of enzymes. He began his career in the Department of Chemistry at MTSU in 2013 and was promoted to associate professor in 2019.

In addition to teaching a variety of organic chemistry courses, Bicker mentors graduate and undergraduate students in the development of high-throughput screening techniques to discover, synthesize, and characterize antimicrobial molecules known as peptoids to combat deadly bacterial and fungal infections. His research has been funded multiple times by the National Institutes of Health, has been published in a variety of peer-reviewed journals, and has resulted in several patents.

Bicker is particularly interested in the growth and success of research at MTSU and was one of a team of faculty who brought to fruition the University Council for Sponsored Scholarship, serving as its first chair during the 2022–23 academic year. Additionally, Bicker was recently appointed as the associate dean for research in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences.



Song Cui

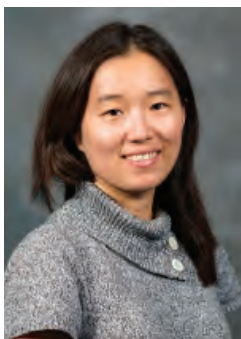
Department of Agriculture

Promoted to Professor

Song Cui received his B.S. in Agricultural Science from Lanzhou University in China and his Ph.D. in Crop Science from Texas Tech University. He is a broadly trained agronomist with expertise in big data algorithms, crop physiology, forage production, simulation modeling, soil and boundary layer flux (CO₂, water vapor, and greenhouse gases) measurements, and large-scale agroecosystem studies addressing issues such as water sustainability and climate change. Particularly, Cui is interested in integrating machine learning techniques into advanced agronomic research domains, including remote sensing, bioinformatics, meta-analysis, and plant growth/ecological modeling. Furthermore, as a field agronomist, Cui enjoys conducting variety trials and cropping system research on various row, forage, and specialty crops in different agroecosystems.

Cui has authored and co-authored more than 40 high-impact journal articles since 2013. He has served as a reviewer for more than 10 peer-reviewed journals and has reviewed more than 30 journal articles in the past five years. Furthermore, he has served as the principal investigator for more than \$3 million in externally funded research projects since 2013, mainly from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Collectively, he has been involved in more than \$11 million in collaborative projects nationwide.

Cui previously served as the chair of the Airborne and Satellite Remote Sensing Community of the American Society of Agronomy. He also served as president of Southern Branch of the American Society of Agronomy. Cui has served as an external grant reviewer panelist on eight external funding programs since 2013. He frequently mentors undergraduate and graduate student research projects and teaches courses including forage crops, field crop production, crop cophysiology, precision agriculture, and agricultural statistics and data analysis.



Keying Ding

Department of Chemistry

Promoted to Professor

Keying Ding, born in Liaocheng, China, earned her Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Rochester in 2009, studying bioinorganic and organometallic chemistry. She then undertook a postdoctoral position at the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, working on projects ranging from synthetic inorganic chemistry to the study of ring opening polymerization of cyclic esters.

In 2013, Ding joined Middle Tennessee State University as an assistant professor. She is a faculty member of the Molecular Biosciences Ph.D. program. Her research interests primarily lie in synthetic inorganic chemistry and catalysis. Her current focus revolves around designing innovative non-precious transition metal catalysts to address challenging chemical transformations. Through her multidisciplinary research endeavors, Ding is dedicated to imparting comprehensive research skills to her students and fostering their understanding of innovative approaches for green and sustainable chemistry. In 2019, she was granted tenure and promoted to the position of associate professor.

Ding has collaborated with graduate and undergraduate students, publishing numerous papers in prestigious journals. She has received multiple research grants from federal agencies, including three awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and one from the Petroleum Research Fund of the American Chemical Society. Ding actively engages in initiatives such as the Tennessee Board of Regents Student Engagement, Retention, and Success pilot program, offering research opportunities to undergraduate students from minority groups, first-generation, and low-income families. She has also collaborated on the NSF Research Experiences for Undergraduates program, providing research opportunities for undergraduate students nationwide.

Since 2014, Ding has served as the faculty advisor of the MTSU Chemistry Society. Her contributions and accomplishments in the field earned her recognition as an Outstanding Woman in STEM in June 2019 by MTSU's Women in STEM Center.



Grant E. Gardner

Department of Biology

Promoted to Professor

Grant Gardner completed a B.S. in the Biological Sciences from Vanderbilt University, after which he worked as a research assistant at Vanderbilt University's School of Medicine. He then continued his studies with a master's in Zoology from North Carolina State University (NCSU) and worked as a community college biology instructor for several years. He returned to academia to complete his Ph.D. in Science Education at NCSU. He worked as a teaching assistant professor at East Carolina University before joining MTSU as an assistant professor of Biology in fall 2013.

Gardner is a graduate faculty member with MTSU's interdisciplinary Mathematics and Science Education (MSE) Ph.D. program. His scholarship focuses on understanding the personal/structural affordances and barriers to STEM faculty implementation of evidence-based instructional practices. He has published and presented widely in the field of biology education research and has secured over \$1 million in external funding (primarily from the National Science Foundation) to support this work. Over his 10-year career at MTSU, he has chaired or co-chaired 13 doctoral students to completion of their dissertation research projects.

Gardner has served as the Biology Education focal area representative in the MSE Coordination Committee over his entire tenure at MTSU. He has also served as an associate director for MTSU's Tennessee STEM Education Center for the past three years.



Samuel Haruna

Departmental of Agriculture

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Samuel Haruna joined MTSU as a minority dissertation fellow while working on his doctorate in Soils, Environmental and Atmospheric Sciences from the University of Missouri. After completing his Ph.D., he became an assistant professor in the School of Agriculture at MTSU. Haruna has taught several classes in the School of Agriculture and was awarded the College of Basic and Applied Sciences Teaching Excellence Award in 2022.

He has served on various departmental and college committees. Additionally, he is an associate editor for two discipline-specific peer-reviewed journals and has reviewed over 80 manuscripts for more than 10 journals in his field. He also has served on review panels for various regional and international agencies. Haruna's research has produced about 20 peer-reviewed manuscripts in high-impact journals. He has published two invited book chapters and reviewed another discipline-specific book proposal for Springer Nature publishers.

To support his research, Haruna has been part of various research grants totaling over \$4 million in external funds and has collaborated with researchers at institutions such as the University of Missouri, University of Kentucky, University of Michigan, and Auburn University. Further, he has mentored several undergraduate students in research (including them as co-authors in several peer-reviewed publications) and directed diverse undergraduate Honors theses. Additionally, he has worked with several farmers in Rutherford, Williamson, and Coffee counties on improving the productivity of their farming practices as part of his outreach activities.

Haruna is a member of the Soil Science Society of America, American Society of Agronomy, Crop Science Society of America, Soil and Water Conservation Society, and Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Honor Society.

In addition to his doctorate, he has a B.S. in Geology from Kogi State University in Nigeria and a master's in Environmental Science from Lincoln University in Missouri.



Yangseung Jeong

Department of Biology

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Yangseung Jeong has a B.A. and M.A. in Anthropology from Seoul National University in South Korea and a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Tennessee. He worked as a forensic anthropologist at the Central Identification Laboratory of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), where his mission was to

identify the skeletal remains of U.S. service members killed during the Korean War and WWII.

In 2017, Jeong was appointed as an assistant professor with the Department of Biology and the Forensic Science program at MTSU. As a Forensic Science faculty member, he contributed to the program's accreditation by the Forensic Science Education Programs Accreditation Commission (FEPAC) in 2022.

Jeong's research program aims to contribute to the national and international forensic communities by generating new techniques and data for forensic research and investigations and by validating previously published techniques to enhance their accuracy and broaden applicability. In 2022, his research on a new digital pair-matching technique was nationally recognized with the prestigious Ellis R. Kerley Research Award. Jeong has established significant databases at MTSU, including the Korean CT Database, the Forensically Important Flies Collection, and the MTSU Outdoor Forensic Facility, which have attracted much interest from students and peer researchers.

Jeong's efforts to enhance the national and international recognition of MTSU include 45 journal article reviews; service on the editorial board of an international peer-reviewed journal, *Anatomy & Biological Anthropology*; service on a plenary panel at an international conference; forensic anthropological consultations for government agencies and private parties; workshop hosting for international attendees; and signing memorandums of understanding with three international institutions for students and research exchange.



Alyson E. Lischka

Department of Mathematical Sciences

Promoted to Professor

Alyson E. Lischka, who joined the Mathematics Education group in the Department of Mathematical Sciences in 2013, has a B.S. in Mathematics from Michigan State University, an M.S. in Secondary Mathematics Education from Georgia State University, and an Ed.S. and Ed.D. in Teacher Leadership for

Learning with a concentration in Adolescent Mathematics from Kennesaw State University.

At MTSU, she has taught content and methods courses for prospective mathematics teachers, supervised secondary mathematics student teachers, and provided mentoring and course instruction for the Mathematics and Science Education Ph.D. program. Her published research and scholarship are focused on supporting prospective and practicing mathematics teachers in developing effective mathematics teaching practices.

Since 2016, Lischka has served on the leadership team for the Mathematics Teacher Education Partnership (MTEP), a national partnership of over 40 institutions. MTEP is a coordinated research, development, and implementation effort to transform secondary mathematics teacher preparation programs. In her work with MTEP, Lischka guides the MODULE(S2) research action cluster in addressing the problem of improving mathematics content courses for prospective secondary mathematics teachers. She leads the research hub for the current National Science Foundation grant awarded to MTEP and coordinates the local MTEP partnership, which includes Tennessee Technological University and Tennessee State University. Lischka also served as a primary investigator with the MODULE(S2) NSF grant that emerged from this partnership.

Lischka served on the editorial team for two books in the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators Professional Series and participates in service roles in national organizations. She led a team to host an international mathematics education research conference, PME-NA 44, in fall 2022 and published the proceedings from that conference. Locally, she served as a leader for Project IMPACT, a six-year professional learning project supporting over 200 K–8 mathematics teachers in several area school systems. Lischka is the faculty advisor for the MTSU Wesley Foundation and a past treasurer for the MTSU Wesley Foundation Board of Directors.



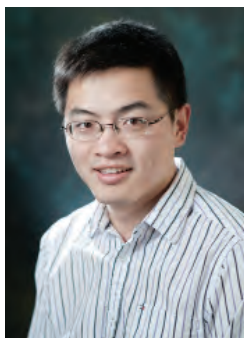
Thomas Nicholas

*School of Concrete and
Construction Management
Tenured*

Thomas Nicholas is a professor and the new director of MTSU's School of Concrete and Construction Management. He holds baccalaureate degrees in Civil Engineering Technology from Fairmont State University and Civil Engineering from West Virginia University; a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from West Virginia University; and a Ph.D. in Infrastructure and Environmental Systems from the University of North Carolina–Charlotte. He is a registered professional engineer in North Carolina.

Nicholas taught construction/engineering/engineering technology courses for over 20 years at Fairmont State University and UNC–Charlotte.

He has served as a lead investigator in infrastructure-critical projects, receiving external funding from private and government agencies. His work has focused on pavement management systems, accelerated bridge construction, structural rehabilitation, masonry wall assemblies, roadway maintenance management, and bridge performance and rating. Nicholas has also served as an external consultant/expert in risk analysis, instrumentation, surveying, construction planning and administration, building energy efficiency, and continuous improvement and assessment. Additionally, he has been active in numerous construction and engineering professional organizations at a national/international level including Transportation Research Board, American Society for Engineering Education, American Institute of Steel Construction, American Society of Civil Engineers, and the International Association of Journals and Conferences/International Society of Agile Manufacturing (IAJC/ISAM).



Mengliang Zhang

Department of Chemistry

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Mengliang Zhang is an associate professor of Chemistry and a faculty member in the Molecular Biosciences Ph.D. and Forensic Science programs. As a principal investigator, he has received over \$1.16 million in federal grant funds in the past five years from various funding agencies, such as the National Science

Foundation, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the U.S. Department of Justice. He is also the co-principal investigator on two other grants from the U.S. Department of Energy and USDA.

MTSU students (12 undergraduate, one master's, and three Ph.D.) involved with his research have presented at 20 national or international conferences and have been co-authors with Zhang on 13 publications since 2018. His students have won multiple awards/scholarships, such as a Barry Goldwater Scholarship, first place in student poster presentations at the Tennessee Academy of Science meetings (twice), first place in the MTSU Scholars Week poster exposition (twice), and eight MTSU Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity (URECA) grants.

Zhang's research interests revolve around chemical analysis by mass spectrometric methods and chemometrics. Projects include the analysis of forensic textile fibers collected at crime scenes, less volatile components of ignitable liquid residues from fire debris, secondary metabolites from food and agricultural materials, organic ligands in semiconductor quantum dots, and toxic compounds such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in wildfire smoke. Recently, his collaborative research on bioactive compound analysis in the Tennessee wild American ginseng, the DART-MS characterization of ligands on nanocrystals, and the review paper on metabolomics in food and agriculture were selected for the covers of *Chemistry & Biodiversity*, *Langmuir*, and *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, respectively.

After obtaining a Ph.D. in Analytical Chemistry from Ohio University, Zhang conducted postdoctoral research in the Food Composition and Methods Development Lab at USDA. He received the Tomas A. Hirschfeld Scholar Award from the Federation of Analytical Chemistry and Spectroscopy Societies (FACSS) and the John A. Milner Fellowship from USDA and the National Institutes of Health. Since joining MTSU in 2017, Zhang has served as session chair at the FACSS national conferences for five years and was elected to serve on the *Journal of Forensic Sciences* editorial board in 2022.



Vaughn W. Barry

*Department of Health and Human Performance
Promoted to Professor*

Vaughn W. Barry earned an Exercise Science bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University, a master's from Ball State University focusing on Clinical Exercise Physiology, and a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina studying Health Aspects of Physical Activity.

Over his past 11 years as a faculty member, his research publications and presentations have garnered over 2,000 citations, including position stands, official statements, consensus statements, and published guidelines from organizations such as the American Heart Association, the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Stroke Association, and the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. His research also has been referenced by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, *HuffPost*, *Pacific Standard*, LinkedIn, and various media outlets.

Barry's overall research vision is to help families and communities receive the health benefits associated with being physically active. His grants, published research, and related service activities are in line with this vision. This includes his published articles with undergraduate and graduate students and his work with a variety of university and community partners. Some of the most rewarding experiences throughout this process have been serving older adults one-on-one while trying to improve their lives through improved physical activity.



Cathy Cooper

*School of Nursing
Promoted to Professor*

Cathy Cooper received a B.S.N. from Indiana State University, an M.S.N. from Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis, and an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. She has been in higher education since 1996, having taught for 13 years in the Bachelor of

Science in Nursing and the R.N. to B.S.N. programs at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire before coming to MSTU in fall 2008.

Cooper is a certified nurse educator through the National League for Nursing; she received this designation in 2009 and has successfully recertified every five years since then. She is also a certified online instructor through Learning Resources Network and has served as an online faculty mentor for MTSU Online, reviewing new and revised courses for online delivery.

Cooper teaches both undergraduate and graduate students at MTSU and is the associate director for the graduate Nursing program. She has published original research; written a continuing education course for nurses published with Western Schools, a nationally recognized provider of continuing education courses; and authored or co-authored articles on a variety of health care topics in peer-reviewed journals. She is a reviewer for the journal *MEDSURG Nursing* and the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, and a member of Sigma, the international nursing honor society. Cooper is currently on the board of directors of Greenhouse Ministries in Murfreesboro and Community Helpers of Rutherford County.

Cooper’s research interests include promoting self-efficacy in individuals with chronic health conditions, pedagogical practices, and teaching and learning strategies for developing critical thinking and clinical reasoning skills. She is currently co-principal investigator on an MT-IGO grant focused on assessment of the certified nursing assistant workforce working in long-term care facilities in Tennessee.



Amanda J. Flagg

*School of Nursing
Promoted to Professor*

Amanda J. Flagg received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree at the Nursing School of York College of Pennsylvania, earned a dual master's degree from Boston University in Education and Counseling and a third master's in an advanced nursing role, that of clinical nurse specialist, followed by her doctoral degree from the College of Nursing at the University of Texas Health Science Center–San Antonio.

Flagg is retired from the Air Force Nurse Corps, having served 20 years. There she worked in multiple roles as unit nurse manager, nursing staff development officer, flight nurse, researcher, and faculty. She is currently a clinical nurse scientist teaching research and nursing theory among other courses to undergraduate and graduate Nursing students.

Her research interests include theory building using the concept of concordance in patient-centered care; women's health, particularly outcomes of recovery from major cardiac events; educational interventions, noting impact of concept-based curriculum and improvement of NCLEX test scores; and instrument development.

Flagg has traveled with students internationally to enhance their nursing experience by tending to populations living in underdeveloped countries and enjoys working with students participating in flu shot programs, health fairs, poster presentations, and Honors theses. She also has served on several committees, including the Culture of Safety center initiative as an advisory council member for the state of Tennessee. This is her 11th year as a faculty member at Middle Tennessee State University.



Brandon Grubbs

*Department of Health and Human Performance
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Brandon Grubbs began his career at Middle Tennessee State University in 2017 as an assistant professor in the Department of Health and Human Performance and is currently the undergraduate program coordinator for Exercise Science. He has a B.S. in Exercise Science from Florida State University, a master's in Health Promotion and Exercise Science from Southeastern Louisiana University, and a Ph.D. in Exercise Physiology from Florida State University with extensive training on mechanisms of aging. He is also a certified exercise physiologist through the American College of Sports Medicine since 2012.

Grubbs has published and presented on concepts of physical aging, such as muscular power, physical function and mobility, sarcopenia, osteoarthritis, and frailty syndrome while serving as a mentor to undergraduate and graduate students. In 2019, he co-founded the MTSU Positive Aging Consortium, which consists of faculty from numerous programs, departments, and colleges with expertise and research interests in aging and older adults. His work with the Positive Aging Consortium helped facilitate a five-year sub-award from Vanderbilt's Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program grant (through the federal Health Resources and Services Administration) to support his research in muscular power and physical frailty in assisted living residents in middle Tennessee.

While at MTSU, Grubbs has been nominated twice as an Influential Faculty Member (2020, 2021) and recognized by the MTSU Career Center as a Career Influencer (2022).



James R. Houston

Department of Psychology

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

James R. Houston received his Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from Ohio State University in 2011 while becoming involved in research focusing on auditory speech perception and psychometric scale construction. He subsequently entered the Adult Development and Aging doctoral program at the University of Akron, where he engaged in coursework and research with a strong focus on the cognitive and neurophysiological consequences of normal aging. After receiving his doctorate, Houston completed a two-year postdoctoral research fellowship examining the structural, physiological, and psycho-affective correlates of the congenital Chiari malformation syndrome.

In fall 2018, Houston began as an assistant professor in developmental psychology at Middle Tennessee State University. He teaches coursework in human development, aging, statistics, and research methods. His research focuses on the fundamental mechanisms underlying cognitive aging, the neural mechanisms underlying age-related differences in affect processing, and understanding the role of the cerebellum in cognitive function through the study of Chiari malformation. In 2021, he received funding from the Conquer Chiari foundation to further examine associations between cerebro-cerebellar pathways, cognitive function, and anxious-depressive symptomatology. His publications have appeared in *Experimental Aging Research*, *Neuropsychology*, *Psychological Medicine*, *The Cerebellum*, and the *Journal of Neuroradiology*, among other journals.

In 2022 Houston was inducted as a fellow to the Psychonomic Society, the preeminent society for the study of cognition. He also holds editorial review board positions at *Experimental Aging Research* and *Frontiers in Cognition*. At MTSU, Houston has served for multiple years as a member and chair of the Internal Grant Opportunities committee. He also contributes his time to events held at the local St. Clair Senior Center.



Angela S. Ramos

*Department of Health and Human Performance
Promoted to Master Instructor*

Angela Ramos, a Nashville native, has a B.B.A. in Finance and a Master of Science in Health, Physical Education, and Recreation from Middle Tennessee State University. She has enjoyed 22 years as a full-time MTSU instructor and is certified by the Tennessee Department of Education as a TEAM teacher evaluator.

In 2009, she was nominated for MTSU's Outstanding Teacher award, and has 15 MTSU awards as a teacher who makes a difference. Her areas of expertise are multidisciplinary; she specializes in dance, physical education, fitness, Pilates, and somatic/holistic movement.

Ramos has 25 years as artistic director of MTSU Performing Arts Company (MPAC) and has produced and directed over 50 dance concerts for MPAC. Her research activity is revealed through choreographic works and performance and deals directly with the composition of dance studies. Ramos has created 40 choreographic works for MPAC, and most of her choreographic works are considered to be narratives; however, her body of work is expansive. She has explored many dance styles, from ballet to hip-hop, and strives to provide a lens to experience the broad spectrum of dance.

Ramos believes in giving back and takes joy in serving the community. Throughout her MTSU career, she has volunteered for numerous events on campus from judging competitions to guest artist/instructor. She is the founder and director of Project Dance, a partnership with Murfreesboro City Schools, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and the Extended School Program (ESP). She is the founder and director of MTSU Summer Dance Intensive (2000–06).

In 2009, Ramos brought national attention to MTSU and made history by being the first director from a non-HBCU to host the national dance conference Black College Dance Exchange. Currently, she serves on the board for the Rutherford Arts Alliance, supporting its mission to connect creatives in our community. Her passion for service has created opportunities and led her to make connections and friendships that will last a lifetime.



Elizabeth A. Smith

Department of Human Sciences

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Elizabeth “Liz” A. Smith has a B.S. in Dietetics from Purdue University and a master’s in Health Service Administration from Central Michigan University. Her Ph.D. is in Agriculture, Communication, Leadership, and Education, with a concentration in Extension Education, from Ohio State University. She began her career as a clinical dietitian, specializing in pediatrics with Wolfson Children’s Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. Smith worked as a clinical registered dietitian in many locations as she and her husband, who was a naval aviator, moved across the U.S.

In 2000, she accepted a position with Ohio State University Extension, where she served as an educator and regional program specialist for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed). Managing a \$1.7 million state SNAP-Ed grant, she supervised program assistants in a 30-county region.

After accepting a position at MTSU as an assistant professor in 2017, Smith helped to develop the Master of Professional Studies Leadership in Nutrition program. She provided leadership to the graduate program until she transitioned to director of the Didactic Program in Dietetics (DPD) in August 2022. Maintaining the program’s strong reputation—it has obtained a 100% internship and post-graduate match/acceptance rate over the past five years—is one of Smith’s goals and proudest accomplishments.

Smith has published and presented research on the access and education of increasing vegetables and fruits in the diet, and on the use of motivational interviewing (MI) in dietetics and other health care professions. She has co-facilitated a Faculty Learning Community on MI in pedagogy. Smith has started two aquaponic tower gardens in the Ellington Human Sciences Building where her students grow and harvest a variety of greens and herbs. They share their produce with older adults at St. Clair Senior Center in conjunction with nutrition education.

Smith serves as the recruitment and marketing officer for the Tennessee Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

Currently she is offering Dangers of Fentanyl trainings across campus and is co-facilitating Family to Family classes offered by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.



Sherri Stevens

*School of Nursing
Promoted to Professor*

Sherri Stevens has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Middle Tennessee State University, a Master of Science in Nursing from the University of Alabama, and a Ph.D. in Nursing from the University of Tennessee. Her nursing career began at St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville, where she held a variety of roles such as staff nurse in the emergency department and clinical nurse specialist for vascular surgery during her 17 years with the organization. Stevens began her teaching career at Columbia State Community College. She also has held faculty positions at Cumberland University Rudy School of Nursing and Lipscomb University. In 2012, Stevens was appointed as an associate professor in the MTSU School of Nursing. She teaches in the undergraduate and graduate Nursing programs.

Stevens has an interest in qualitative research methods. She has published a variety of articles regarding women and cardiovascular disease, cardiac patients' understanding of discharge instructions, and preventing 30-day hospital readmissions. She has presented these topics at state, regional, and international conferences. She has written book chapters for Linton and Matteson's *Medical-Surgical Nursing* (First Aid, Emergency Care and Disaster Management) and *Cardiovascular Outcomes: Collaborative, Path-Based Approaches* (Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm Management and Outcomes).

Stevens has held a variety of roles in professional nursing organizations including the Emergency Nurses Association, Tennessee Association of Student Nurses (faculty liaison), American Nurses Association, and Tennessee Nurses Association, where she served a term as vice president. She is a member of the Sigma Theta Tau nursing honor society and board member of the MTSU School of Nursing Xi Alpha chapter.

She has been involved in many community organizations, including the American Heart Association, Journeys in Community Living, and Friends of Smyrna Library.



Ben Stickle

*Department of Criminal Justice Administration
Promoted to Professor*

Ben Stickle holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Cedarville University and a Master of Science and Doctor of Philosophy in Justice Administration from the University of Louisville. His research interests include policing (use of force and administration), property crime (metal theft and burglary), and emerging crimes (package theft, crime and COVID, and crime in the sharing economy).

Stickle's theoretical focus is crime opportunity and rational choice, specializing in qualitative methods. His research has appeared in well-ranked journals such as the *American Journal of Criminal Justice*, *Police Practice & Research*, and *Policing: An International Journal*. He is the author of *Metal Scrappers and Thieves* (Springer, 2017), co-editor of *Policing Behavior, Hiring, and Crime Fighting: An International View* (Routledge, 2021), editor of *Field Studies in Environmental Criminology* (Routledge, 2022), and author of dozens of book chapters, reviews, and encyclopedia entries. His research has garnered national and international attention, including media interviews (e.g., *New York Times*, *Good Morning America*, NBC Investigative Reporting), presentations in eight countries (including at the United Nations in New York and Geneva and the Stockholm Criminology Symposium), and across numerous practitioner outlets. Stickle is the recipient of MTSU's 2020–21 Distinguished Research Award.

In addition to his research, Stickle has over 20 years of experience in criminal justice, including service as a police officer, crime scene investigator, and private security officer. He is a two-time president of the Kentucky Peace Officers Association and a Kentucky Law Enforcement Council member. A graduate of the National Forensic Academy (Session XXII), Stickle holds multiple professional certifications and has served as an expert witness on police administration matters. Currently, he incorporates his experience and research interests into service as a program evaluator or primary investigator for multiple Bureau of Justice Statistics and Bureau of Justice Assistance grants totaling over \$7 million with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, Rutherford County Correctional Work Center, and others focused on justice mental health responses, offender reentry, human trafficking, and crime statistics.



Michael A. Erskine

*Department of Information Systems
and Analytics*

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Michael A. Erskine received his Ph.D. in Computer Science and Information Systems from the University of Colorado Denver and joined the Department of Information Systems and Analytics faculty at Middle Tennessee State University in 2017. Earlier, he served as the director of the Educational Technology Center at Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Erskine teaches location analytics, web development, and IT project management. His research interests include effective IT project governance, the influence of emerging technology on society, IT workforce trends, and decision-making using geospatial data. His research has been presented at numerous international, national, and regional conferences. His work also has been published in several journals, including *Information Systems Frontiers*, *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*, *Computers in Human Behavior*, *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, and *Journal of Computer Information Systems*.

Erskine enjoys sailing, scuba diving, and hiking in his spare time.



Sarah A. Garven

Department of Accounting

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Sarah A. Garven holds a Ph.D. in Accounting from the University of Alabama, an M.B.A. from the University of Tennessee, a B.A. in Spanish from the University of Tennessee, and a B.S. in Accounting and Management from Lipscomb University. Before joining Middle Tennessee State University, she served on the

Accounting faculty at Ohio University, where she received the Deloitte Faculty Award for Research, and at Morehead State University, where she received the Student Government Association Apple Award for Educational Excellence. She is an active certified public accountant (Ohio) with auditing experience in Big Four public accounting and industry.

Since joining the faculty at MTSU in 2017, Garven has taught financial accounting and internal auditing courses and served as the coordinator of the Internal Auditing Education Partnership (IAEP) program and the chair of the MTSU Internal Auditing Advisory Board. She was the faculty advisor of the MTSU student chapter of the Institute of Internal Auditors from 2017–22 and received an MTSU Accounting Advisory Board Partnership Award in 2021.

Her primary area of research focuses on the impact of corporate governance mechanisms, especially auditors, on the management of financial results in both for-profit and nonprofit settings. She has articles published in several journals, including *Auditing: A Journal of Practice & Theory*, *Managerial Auditing Journal*, *Accounting Education*, *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, and *Current Issues in Auditing*.

She and her husband, Brian, have three children—Claire, Ethan, and Brooke—and Garven is a Sunday school teacher at her church.



Timothy H. Greer

*Department of Information Systems
and Analytics*

Promoted to Professor

Timothy H. Greer has a Ph.D. in Business Administration with an emphasis in Management Information Systems from the University of Mississippi, as well as an M.S. in Economics from Murray State University and a B.S. in Economics from Missouri State University. In 1999, he was appointed as an assistant professor at MTSU in the Department of Information Systems and Analytics. Since 2018, he has served as chair of the department.

As a faculty member in Information Systems and Analytics, Greer teaches management of security operations, introduction to cybersecurity, and security assurance for information systems audit. He has published and presented on topics in information security, decision support systems, and the IT workforce. His research has been published in *The DATA BASE for Advances in Information Systems*, *the Journal of Information System Security*, *the Journal of Information Systems Education*, *the Journal of Organizational and End User Computing*, and *the Journal of Computer Information Systems*.

Greer initiated the successful initial application for ABET accreditation in 2021 for the B.B.A. in Information Systems. He has served multiple terms on the MTSU Faculty Senate, representing both his department and the college. He is a past president of the Society for the Advancement of Information Systems and continues to serve on its advisory board. Greer was awarded an Instructional Technologies Development Grant for the use of innovative technologies in the classroom. He was awarded the Jones College of Business Outstanding Faculty Member as an assistant professor. He has been recognized on several occasions as a faculty member who makes a difference by the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment and Academic Services.



Joyce T. Heames

Department of Management

Tenured

Joyce T. Heames is the newly appointed dean of the Jennings A. Jones College of Business and a professor of Management. She holds a B.S. and M.B.A. from Samford University in Alabama and earned her Ph.D. from the University of Mississippi. She came to MTSU from Berry College in Rome, Georgia, where she served seven years as the dean of the Campbell School of Business. Before Berry, Heames was at West Virginia University as associate dean of innovation, outreach, and engagement for the John Chambers College of Business and Economics. A native of Birmingham, Alabama, she started her academic career in the Brock School of Business at Samford University.

Heames' primary area of research is counterproductive work behavior, but she also explores leadership, conflict resolution, and the history of managerial thought. She has more than 35 years of experience in business and education as a trainer, teacher, facilitator, and college administrator. She has delivered executive education and professional development programs for major corporations such as Mercedes Benz. As a popular speaker and trainer, Heames has delivered programs on topics such as conflict management, generational gaps in the workplace, the value of diversity, and creating high-performance teams.

While in Georgia, Heames served as a Rome Floyd County Chamber of Commerce board member and was a Rome Rotary Paul Harris Fellow. In the academic arena, she has been an officer of the Southern Management Association and was a long-standing member of the Academy of Management and the Society for Human Resource Management. Heames is a member of Beta Gamma Sigma and Phi Kappa Phi. She also serves on the board of the Southern Business Administration Association.



Timothy R. Moake

Department of Management

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Timothy R. Moake has a Ph.D. in Business Administration from the University of Missouri, an M.B.A. from Utah State University, and a B.S. in Management from Brigham Young University. Moake's career began in financial services, from which he ventured out as an entrepreneur, running his own mortgage brokerage for several years. While working for himself, an opportunity to coach high school basketball presented itself, which would change his career trajectory. He enjoyed working with younger individuals, so in addition to coaching, he became a high school business teacher and a Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) advisor. This career change to education ultimately led him back to school to earn his Ph.D.

Moake enjoys working with and advising his students as they progress along their career journeys. As part of the Management faculty, he teaches courses in human resource management, talent acquisition and management, and principles of management. In 2021, he was awarded the E.W. "Wink" Midgett Distinguished Teaching Award for the Jones College of Business.

Moake enjoys doing research and primarily examines how workers' various roles in and out of the workplace (e.g., organizational, cultural, familial) influence workplace attitudes and performance. He also examines how job resources and job demands interact to influence career-related outcomes. In 2017, he was awarded the Douglas Nigh Award from the International Management Division of the Academy of Management.

Moake and his wife, Jamie, live in Murfreesboro with their three children.



Michael C. Peasley

Department of Marketing

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Michael C. Peasley is an associate professor of Marketing in the Jennings A. Jones College of Business at Middle Tennessee State University. He holds a Ph.D. in Marketing from the University of Memphis. Before receiving his Ph.D., Peasley spent 15 years in industry as a sales professional, digital marketer, and, most recently, as a vice president of sales and marketing.

As an educator in the B.B.A. and M.B.A. programs, Peasley's classroom instruction has earned him the Bridgestone Americas Distinguished Lecturer Award. He uses his professional experience in sales and marketing to connect business problems to student learning. Using phenomenon-based learning, his classroom activities provide students with a holistic learning approach using real-world phenomena to teach concepts and skills.

Peasley is also a well-published researcher and director of the Office of Consumer Research in the Jones College of Business. His research is primarily focused on the financial value created through strategic co-branding and marketing alliances. His scholarly work has appeared in several journals, including the *Journal of Business Research*, the *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, the *Journal of Business Ethics*, the *Journal of Advertising Research*, and the *Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing*.



Michael A. Roach

*Department of Economics and Finance
Promoted to Professor*

Michael A. Roach joined the faculty at Middle Tennessee State University in 2011 after he received his Ph.D. in Economics from Northwestern University. He also has an M.A. in Economics from Northwestern and a B.A. in Economics from Rhodes College.

Much of Roach's research has focused on applying empirical microeconomic techniques to a variety of sports settings. This work has centered on turnover in the labor market for head coaches and decision-makers' attitudes toward risk in sports settings. This work has been published in such outlets as the *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, *Economic Inquiry*, the *Journal of Sports Economics*, and the *Journal of Sport Management*. Because of his work in this area, he has been featured in *The Washington Post*, *Sports Illustrated*, and ESPN.com and on National Public Radio, as well as locally on WMOT. He also has published in the area of law and economics, with a particular emphasis on the labor market for criminal defense attorneys.

At MTSU, Roach has taught microeconomics courses at the undergraduate, M.A., and Ph.D. levels, as well as more specialized courses in industrial organization and sports economics. He has actively mentored graduate students in the department's Ph.D. program, chairing eight dissertation committees and serving on many others. He has served as the editor of the *Journal for Economic Educators* since 2019, chaired his department's Scholarship Committee since 2019, and chaired the Jones College of Business Faculty Development Committee during the 2020–21 academic year. He also has served as a member of the University's Graduate Council and its Faculty Research and Creative Activity Committee.



Wisarut “Wis” Suwanprasert

*Department of Economics and Finance
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Wisarut “Wis” Suwanprasert joined Middle Tennessee State University as an assistant professor in the Department of Economics and Finance in 2017. He has a B.S. in Economics from Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and earned his M.S. and Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Prior to joining MTSU, Suwanprasert was a visiting assistant professor at Vanderbilt University. He is internationally recognized and regularly participates in the Bank of Thailand as a visiting research fellow.

Suwanprasert’s primary research focus centers on the World Trade Organization’s rules on trade agreements, the effects of trade policies, and the Thai economy. He has published his research in esteemed journals such as the *Review of International Economics*, the *World Economy*, the *Review of World Economics*, *Public Choice*, the *International Economic Journal*, *The B.E. Journal of Theoretical Economics*, and *Economics Letters*. His expertise in these areas has solidified his reputation as a respected scholar.

Suwanprasert’s exceptional teaching abilities were acknowledged when he received the prestigious 2020–21 Bridgestone Americas Distinguished Lecturer Award. Furthermore, his contributions to the field garnered recognition from the office of the permanent secretary of Thailand’s Ministry of Labor in 2022. He also achieved third place at the United Nations’ 2022 U.N. Big Data Hackathon.

Suwanprasert’s dedication to academia is evident through his commitment to teaching, research, and service, making valuable contributions to the Department of Economics and Finance and the University.



Brandon Vagner

Department of Accounting

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Brandon Vagner received his Business Administration Ph.D. in Accountancy from Southern Illinois University–Carbondale (SIUC) in 2017. He also has a Master of Accountancy and Bachelor of Science in Accounting from SIUC and is a certified public accountant. His career started in Big Four public accounting with KPMG St. Louis as an auditor of primarily large publicly traded companies. After five years of experience and a promotion to audit manager, he left KPMG to pursue a career in academics.

Vagner joined the Accounting faculty at Middle Tennessee State University in 2017 as an assistant professor, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. He has consistently received high teaching evaluations with a teaching philosophy to motivate and challenge students to a level that will assist them in reaching their academic and professional goals. He was awarded the 2018 Junior Professorship by the MTSU Accounting Advisory Board and selected as the 2019 Deloitte Outstanding Professor of Accounting at MTSU.

Vagner has published nine articles in peer-reviewed journals while at MTSU. Five of the nine articles are published in an “A” ranking journal, per the Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) Journal Quality Listing. His publications have been featured in *Advances in Accounting Behavioral Research*, *Issues in Accounting Education*, *Managerial Auditing Journal*, *The Journal of Corporate Accounting and Finance*, *Journal of Theoretical Accounting Research*, *Journal of Small Business Strategy*, and the *Tennessee CPA Journal*. His primary research interests are directed toward behavioral research focused on judgments, decisions, and work behaviors in accounting—more specifically, behavioral effects related to design elements of communication, feedback systems, and working arrangements.

Vagner’s most significant contribution to service at MTSU has been his time serving as co-faculty advisor (2018–22) and now lead faculty advisor (2022–present) for Beta Alpha Psi (BAP), an international honor organization for financial information students and professionals. He has also served on department and college-level committees at MTSU.



Sam Zaza

*Department of Information Systems
and Analytics*

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

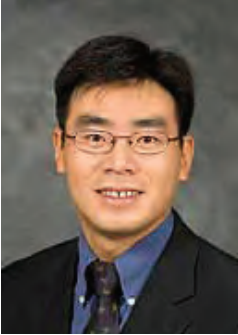
Sam Zaza began her career as an information technology professional in software development and IT project management. After receiving her Ph.D. in Management Information Systems from Florida State University, she was appointed as an assistant professor with the Information Systems and Analytics Department in MTSU's Jones College of Business.

Zaza has delivered talks on information technology workforce and inclusion initiatives and practices to retain and attract IT talent in the greater Nashville area. In 2023, she received the prestigious Greater Nashville Technology Council Award as Diversity and Inclusion Advocate of the Year. Also, she received the Bridgestone Americas Distinguished Lecturer Award and E.W. "Wink" Midgett Award of Excellence in Teaching, Research, and Service.

Her research interests involve innovation and emergent technologies, diversity and inclusion, and IT workforce and careers. Zaza has presented her work regionally and internationally at major conferences as a keynote speaker and a professional development symposium and workshop organizer. In addition, her work has been published or accepted for publication at top-tier journals such as *Management Information Systems Quarterly*, *Information Systems Journal*, and *Information and Organization*, among others.

Zaza serves on the conference committees of regional and international conferences. She is the conference chair of the SIGMIS CPR 2024 that will be hosted by the Information Systems and Analytics Department at MTSU May 29–June 1, 2024. Also, she has been chosen for MTSU's Leadership on Deck Institute 2023–24. In addition, Zaza serves as the Association for Information Systems (AIS) SIG Social Inclusion president, SIG Leadership in IT president, and Women's Network College chair, and is past president of the Middle East and North Africa Chapter. She has received outstanding leadership awards, outstanding service awards, and a best paper first runner-up award by the AIS.

Zaza supports her students by incorporating intercultural exchange through her coursework, where the collaboration will be with An-Najah University in Palestine. In addition, she promotes tech diversity by co-organizing Code Like a Girl camp, hosted by MTSU. Zaza believes that building a diverse workforce that will support greater Nashville's needs must start at the early stages of school.



Kevin Zhao

*Department of Economics and Finance
Promoted to Professor*

Kevin Zhao has served more than 5,000 students at MTSU, teaching finance courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels and advising Economics Ph.D. students. He has a B.S. in Finance from Peking University, a Master of Business Administration from the University of South Carolina, and a Ph.D. in Finance from the University of Tennessee.

Zhao's research focuses on market regulation of short selling and corporate governance in developing markets. He has published over 20 research articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *Applied Economics*, *International Journal of Managerial Finance*, *Review of Pacific-Basin Financial Markets and Policies*, *Applied Financial Economics*, *Journal of Economics and Finance*, *Journal of Accounting and Finance*, *Applied Economics Letters*, and *Business and Economics*. He has presented his research at national conferences such as Financial Management Association, Southern Finance Association, Eastern Finance Association, and Midwest Finance Association.

As a veteran from the investment banking industry and a chartered financial analyst (CFA), Zhao helps his students in networking with investment professionals, getting involved in the CFA program, and building financial careers. He has sponsored over 20 CFA test scholarships, saving students more than \$20,000 in testing expenses. Zhao has advised the CFA Research Challenge for over a decade. Leveraging his investment experiences, he has advised the TVA Investment Challenge (FIN 4900), which frequently beats the S&P 500 in total return.

In his spare time, Zhao enjoys playing chess, running half marathons, building wood furniture from pallets, and cooking delicious and healthy cuisines.



John Lando Carter

*Womack Department of Educational Leadership
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

John Lando Carter is a three-time MTSU graduate, with a B.A. and M.A. in English and an Ed.D. in Assessment, Learning, and School Improvement. Twenty years ago, Carter came to MTSU as a first-generation transfer student from Volunteer State Community College, and he was mentored, coached, and cared for by a host of MTSU faculty members. After graduating with his B.A., he served as a graduate teaching assistant for the English Department while completing his M.A. He then went on to teach in the K–12 school system for nine years.

The next major milestone for him was earning an Ed.D. and joining the MTSU College of Education as an assistant professor. Carter began teaching in a variety of programs and presenting at local, national, and international conferences in education. He also began publishing in the areas of teaching, assessment, learning, and classroom creativity, including a range of articles, book chapters, and a co-authored book titled *Teaching Signature Thinking: Strategies for Unleashing Creativity in the Classroom*. He now serves as the interim director of teaching excellence for the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center.

Carter is proud to be True Blue all the way through. He is grateful for the relentless mentoring and care he has received and aims to do the same for his own students for many years to come.



Neporcha T. Cone

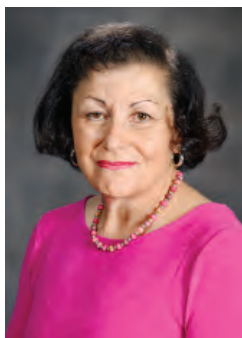
*Department of Elementary and Special
Education*

Tenured

Neporcha T. Cone is the newly appointed dean of the College of Education at MTSU. She has a B.S. in Biology from Florida State University and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of South Florida. She began her career as a middle school science teacher in Miami, where she taught for seven years. After completing her Ph.D., Cone was a postdoctoral scholar at the University of Miami, where she helped to develop science curriculum and assessment instruments for elementary-age multilingual learners.

In 2011, Cone was appointed as an assistant professor of Science Education at Kennesaw State University. In 2015, she received tenure and promotion to associate professor. In 2019, she was promoted to professor. While at Kennesaw State University, Cone also served as chair of the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education and interim associate dean for Undergraduate Studies.

Cone has published and presented widely on the topic of equity in education. She is committed to providing teacher candidates with learning environments that foster the development of the knowledge, skills, and dispositions requisite for working effectively with students from diverse backgrounds. Developing culturally competent pre-service and in-service teachers is a major strand of her research, for which she has received National Science Foundation grants and has authored several manuscripts.



Pamela Kramer Ertel

*Department of Elementary
and Special Education*

Tenured and Promoted to Professor

Pamela Kramer Ertel has a B.A. in Elementary Education from Marian University in Indiana, an M.A. in Early Childhood Education from Kean University in New Jersey, and an Ed.D. in Elementary Education from Lehigh University in Pennsylvania. Prior to becoming a teacher educator, Kramer Ertel was an elementary classroom teacher for nine years in New Jersey. After transitioning to higher education, she achieved the rank of professor at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania (ESU), where she was a faculty member in the Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education for 18 years. She then served as dean of the College of Education at ESU for approximately seven years.

Kramer Ertel served as president, president-elect, and vice president of Kappa Delta Pi (KDP), the International Honor Society in Education, where she worked alongside the 40,000+ members to promote excellence in education. She remains actively involved in this organization as a member of the Council of Past Presidents. She was recently inducted as a member of the prestigious Eleanor Roosevelt Chapter of KDP, whose purpose is to honor individuals who have made significant and longtime contributions of service to KDP and demonstrated a commitment to its ideals and excellence in teaching.

Teacher education is Kramer Ertel's passion, and her research interests include trauma-informed practices, children's mental health, classroom management, support for adoptive families, and best practices in teacher preparation. She has authored two editions of a book on classroom management, as well as numerous articles and presentations related to teacher education issues. She has been trained as a Trust-Based Relational Intervention practitioner and conducts parent workshops on this trauma-related topic.

Kramer Ertel serves as the program coordinator for the Early Childhood Education program at MTSU. She is also a member of the MT-ALT design and implementation team that is exploring creative, alternative solutions to preparing teachers in an effective and efficient manner.



Ashlee Ensey Hover

*Womack Department of Educational Leadership
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Ashlee Ensey Hover has a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from Tennessee State University, as well as three degrees from Middle Tennessee State University: a Specialist in Education in Curriculum and Instruction, a Master of Education in

Administration and Supervision, and a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies.

She began her career as an elementary school teacher in Rutherford County Schools. She began teaching in the university setting at Tennessee State University and Middle Tennessee State University. Hover has worked with undergraduate and graduate students, teachers, and aspiring school leaders in the Womack Department of Educational Leadership in the College of Education.

After assessing graduate student needs and recognizing a demand for a fully online Curriculum and Instruction M.Ed. for K–12 teachers, Hover designed online courses to move the Curriculum and Instruction (nonlicensure) M.Ed. program fully online. She also developed a new concentration, Teaching and Innovation in PK–16 educational settings, to include teachers of preschool and adult learners.

Hover has published and presented on topics related to early childhood education, performance-based evaluations, teacher education preparation training, online course design, and alternative assessment methods to focus on learning rather than grades.



Frank P. Lambert

*Womack Department of Educational Leadership
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Frank P. Lambert holds an Honors B.A. in History and master's and doctoral degrees in Library and Information Sciences from the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario. Lambert started his academic career at Kent State University and continued his scholarly, teaching, and service endeavors at MTSU, joining its Master of Library Science (M.L.S.) program in the College of Education's Womack Department of Educational Leadership in 2016.

In May 2017, Lambert was appointed director of the M.L.S. program. Through his administrative efforts and in close coordination with his College of Education faculty colleagues, he helped the M.L.S. program attain accreditation with the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). He also has helped the M.L.S. program earn pre-candidacy for accreditation status with the American Library Association (ALA) while he continues its full accreditation efforts.

Lambert has published on a wide variety of topics—informatics (community and e-government), informetrics (webometrics, citation analysis/bibliometrics, and web log data analysis), information organization (classification and descriptive standards), information literacy, and research methods—related to the library and information sciences, with his research cited widely and internationally. His most recent publication efforts focused on the creation of a new method of evaluating information resources to improve information literacy that is based on and supported by empirical bibliometric data called The WHY Method.

His current research studies the more recent phenomenon of social workers being hired as permanent staff in public libraries and how library and information science education can help support this practice. Related to this, Lambert has created, with the critical assistance of colleagues in the Department of Social Work, MTSU's first-ever Master of Library Science/Master of Social Work (M.L.S./M.S.W.) 60-credit-hour dual degree.

Lambert has provided extensive service to the public library community in Tennessee. Besides providing instruction to public library staff across the state, he served two three-year terms on the Stones River Regional Library System Board of Trustees until the board's disbanding in 2022 as well as two three-year terms on the Rutherford County Library System Board of Trustees.



Alicia Pence

*Department of Elementary
and Special Education*

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Having a heart to serve, Alicia Pence began teaching special education in 2001 at Bowling Green Junior High School in Kentucky. After a decade of working closely with students with disabilities as a resource teacher, math interventionist, and inclusion specialist, she realized her passion for training future special education teachers. In fall 2017, Pence graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a Ph.D. in Special Education. During her doctoral studies she was the recipient of the Margaret Bansau Fellowship Award, Robert Bruce Reinoehl Memorial Award, Albin and Young Award, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Fellowship Award.

Since arriving at Middle Tennessee State University, Pence has strived to continue her work to promote inclusive practices for students with disabilities. She has created a range of classes in special education, mentored pre-service and in-service special educators, and facilitated statewide professional development trainings. She also organized the first Council for Exceptional Children Student Charter in 2018 and was honored to be elected president for the Tennessee Council for Exceptional Children in 2022. Pence has been awarded a variety of grants related to experiential learning, inclusive practices, and mentorship. Her research interests involve inclusive participation for persons with disabilities, and she has authored several publications in this area.

Pence is the mother of a young son, Preston, who was diagnosed with autism at 18 months. Her son inspires her to continue strong advocacy efforts in the field of special education. Ultimately, Pence wants to create a legacy of lifelong learning and supportive understanding for individuals with disabilities across our schools and greater communities.



Tiffany A. Wilson

*Womack Department of Educational Leadership
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Tiffany Wilson earned a Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counseling and Rehabilitation Counselor Education and an M.S. in School Counseling from North Carolina A&T State University. She also has a B.A. in Communication Studies and in African American Studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Wilson is a licensed school counselor, licensed career development coordinator, licensed clinical mental health counselor, a national certified counselor, a board certified telemental health provider, and certified clinical trauma professional.

Prior to working at MTSU, Wilson worked as a high school counselor and career development coordinator in North Carolina public schools and as a therapist in various clinical settings.

In 2017, Wilson joined the MTSU Professional Counseling program. She has served as the School Counseling program coordinator since 2019 and as the program coordinator of the Professional Counseling program since December 2022.

Since joining MTSU, Wilson has published and presented at several conferences and provided numerous trainings and workshops on childhood trauma, minority students with disabilities, collaborative efforts within the school community, and healing trauma through healthy relationships. She currently serves as a Mental Health First Aid instructor, the editor of the *International Journal of the Whole Child*, and as the faculty advisor for the School Counselor Collaborative sponsored by the MTSU Center for Educational Media.

In partnership with the Tennessee Department of Education, Wilson serves on the School Counselor Advisory Council and the Mental Health Collaborative Advisory Council, and is a consultant on the Project RAISE Grant, which seeks to fund school-based mental health positions in rural school districts in Tennessee. She also serves as an executive board member for the Tennessee School Counselor Association. In 2021, Wilson received the Dr. Charles Thompson Counselor Educator Award from the Tennessee Counseling Association.



Fred Arroyo

Department of English

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Fred Arroyo received a Master of Arts in Creative Writing (Fiction) from Purdue University, a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (Fiction) from the Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College, and his Ph.D. in English from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. He has published a novel, *The Region of Lost Names*; a collection of short stories, *Western Avenue and Other Fictions*; and most recently *Sown in Earth: Essays of Memory and Belonging* (all published by the University of Arizona Press). *Sown in Earth* was shortlisted for 2021–22 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing (Stanford University Libraries). *Western Avenue* also was shortlisted for the 2014 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing.

Arroyo has published fiction, poetry, and essays in various literary journals and is included in the anthologies *Camino del Sol: Fifteen Years of Latina and Latino Writing* (University of Arizona Press) and *The Colors of Nature: Essays on Culture, Identity, and the Natural World* (Milkweed Editions).

A recipient of an Individual Artistic Fellowship in Literature from the Indiana Arts Commission, Arroyo has presented his writing at the Library of Congress, where an audio recording of an interview and reading is included in the PALABRA Archive, historically known as the Archive of Hispanic Literature on Tape. He has presented his creative writing at various colleges and universities across the country.

At Middle Tennessee State University, Arroyo teaches courses in intermediate and advanced fiction writing, a creative writing course on flash forms (flash fictions, prose poems, and flash nonfiction), and literature courses focused on contemporary and Latino/a literature. He's currently completing a book of poems, *Emigrant Creek and Other Songs*, and a book of short fictions, *The Book of Manuals*.



Mary Beth Asbury

*Department of Communication Studies
Promoted to Professor*

Mary Beth Asbury has a Ph.D. in Communication Studies from the University of Kansas, a Master of Science in Communication Studies from the University of Tennessee, and a B.A. in Communication Studies and Political Science from the University of Georgia. She is also a certified Mental Health First Aid trainer.

She came to MTSU as an assistant professor in 2011 and earned tenure and promotion to associate professor in 2017. She has served as department chair of Communication Studies since 2021.

Her research focuses on health communication in terms of interpersonal communication and identity, and she has presented and published her research in state, regional, and national outlets. Her current research focuses on family communication and the development of weight stigma, body image, and 3D body scanning. The goal of her research is to help people learn how to communicate in ways that are not stigmatizing and hurtful to other people, especially in the areas of body weight and body size.

Asbury currently teaches classes in interpersonal, organizational, and health communication at MTSU. In the classroom, her goal is to help students understand what communication is, how it affects their lives, and how we can always improve our skills. Her teaching has been recognized at both the university and regional level. She was the recipient of the Bob Womack Award from the Student Government Association at MTSU and received the 2019 Outstanding Instructor Award from MTSU. She also received the Dwight L. Freshley Outstanding New Teacher Award from the Southern States Communication Association.

While her résumé may seem impressive, she is ultimately most honored to be perceived as a kind, funny, generous, hard-working, and helpful person who tries to “speak life” into those she encounters.



Emily B. Baran

Department of History

Promoted to Professor

Emily B. Baran began her career at MTSU in 2012 and is currently chair of the History Department. She has a B.A. in History and Russian from Macalester College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Baran's research explores the relationship between minority religious communities and modern states and societies in the Soviet Union and its successor states. She has conducted extensive research in Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova. Her work has been funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Keston Institute, and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, among others.

During her tenure at MTSU, Baran has published two books and multiple articles about the shifting limits of religious toleration in the postwar Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia. Her first monograph, *Dissent on the Margins: How Soviet Jehovah's Witnesses Survived Communism and Lived to Preach About It* (Oxford University Press), reconstructed the history of Jehovah's Witnesses in the postwar Soviet Union. Her second monograph, *To Make a Village Soviet: Jehovah's Witnesses and the Transformation of a Postwar Ukrainian Borderland* (McGill-Queen's University Press), pieces together the imposition of Soviet rule on the far-flung village of Bila Tserkva, using recently declassified state security files, state and regional archival materials, and interviews with families of survivors.

She is currently working on an edited volume for Bloomsbury Academic Press that will bring together an international team of scholars to explore what Jehovah's Witnesses can tell us about the broader conditions of religious tolerance and freedom in modern states. Most recently, her work has addressed how the Putin administration employs the language of anti-extremism to persecute minority religious believers.



Roberta Chevrette

*Department of Communication Studies
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Roberta Chevrette has a B.A. in Anthropology and Women's Studies from Sacramento State University, an M.A. in Communication from Arizona State University, and a Ph.D. in Communication and graduate certificate in Gender Studies from Arizona State University. Her education was informed by a brief career as a queer feminist activist singer-songwriter, which sparked her ongoing interests in communication, identity, and social justice. In 2015, Chevrette accepted a visiting assistant professor position at Kutztown University of Pennsylvania while finishing her dissertation, before arriving at MTSU in 2017.

Chevrette is co-author of the book *Dangerous Dames: Representing Female-Bodied Empowerment in Postfeminist Media* and has published and presented widely on issues relating to rhetorics of race, gender, sexuality, and nation, while mentoring undergraduate and graduate students. Her rhetorical and qualitative research projects use feminist, postcolonial/decolonial, and antiracist frameworks to examine forms of oppression, othering, and resistance in media, social movements, and other cultural spaces.

Chevrette teaches a range of interdisciplinary courses in Communication Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, the Honors College, and the Master of Arts in Liberal Arts program. By connecting theory with lived experience, her teaching guides students to become aware of, and critically examine, how language, symbols, and ideologies shape cultural and communicative structures and practices. She is an advocate for LGBTQ and BIPOC rights and is a board member for Silent No Longer Tennessee, which focuses on providing programs and services for survivors of sexual violence.



Christopher C. Combest

School of Music

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Christopher C. Combest has a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, a Master of Music from the University of Louisville, and a Bachelor of Music from Eastern Kentucky University. Originally from Berea, Kentucky, Combest serves as director of graduate studies at the MTSU School of Music, where he teaches applied tuba, instructs brass chamber music, conducts the MTSU euphonium-tuba ensemble, and performs with the MTSU Faculty Brass Quintet. Prior to joining the music faculty, he served on the faculties of the University of Texas–San Antonio, Southern Illinois University, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and as principal tuba with the Louisville Orchestra.

Combest has performed throughout the United States, Europe, South America, and Asia. Most recently, he performed as a featured artist at the Brazil Tuba Euphonium Workshop in Sao Paulo, Brazil. In addition to his studio session work in Nashville, Combest can be heard on broadcasts for National Public Radio and the BBC, recordings for Sony and Disney, and in performances with numerous orchestras and artists throughout the United States, including film composer John Williams, the Canadian Brass, and Broadway star Audra McDonald.

His latest solo recording, *MOSAIC*, released in December 2022, was recognized by the Global Music Awards, The American Prize, and a nomination for the Roger Bobo Award for Excellence in Recording by the International Tuba Euphonium Association, of which he is a life member.



Derek W. Frisby

Department of History

Promoted to Master Instructor

Derek W. Frisby is a faculty coordinator and lecturer in both the History and Global Studies and Human Geography departments at MTSU, teaching Tennessee, American South, and military history and geography. He is a Middle Tennessee native, an MTSU alumnus, and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran whose research interests deal with military occupation and reconstruction strategies. Frisby has authored numerous articles and essays dealing with Tennessee's Civil War occupation and Reconstruction experiences.

Frisby was a 2003 military history fellow at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, served six years as editor of the *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers* (one of three academic state historical journals), and was coordinating director of the Society for Military History's 2009 annual conference in Murfreesboro. He serves as a historical consultant to regional ROTC programs, National Guard units, Fort Campbell, and Fort Knox, frequently leading specialized battlefield tours, or "staff rides," and teaching military history courses. Frisby leads education abroad courses exploring battlefields in the central Pacific, western and southern Europe, and Vietnam. These courses are signature education abroad programs studying intersections of warfare and culture.

Frisby is also actively involved in various campus initiatives to assist student military veterans and serves as chair of the MTSU Veterans and Military Affairs Committee. He was honored with a 2009 MTSU Outstanding Teaching Award and a 2009 *Daily News Journal* Ruthie Award for Favorite MTSU Professor. The MTSU Alumni Association awarded Frisby the 2015 True Blue Citation of Distinction for Teaching. He appeared on the NatGeo Channel's Civil War series, "Civil Warriors: Episode 3: Hard War," detailing the perilous conditions in Union-occupied middle Tennessee. The U.S. Army Center of Military History selected Frisby to author the volume on Tennessee and Mississippi in 1864 for its 150th anniversary Civil War campaign series.



Kate Goodwin

Department of Theatre and Dance

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Kate Goodwin has a B.S. in Speech and Theatre from Middle Tennessee State University and a Master of Fine Arts in Theatre (Stage Management) from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC). Goodwin began her career teaching theatre at the Nashville School for the Arts. Since then, she has taught in the theatre departments at University of Memphis, Eastern Kentucky University, Asbury University, and Centre College before joining the faculty of the MTSU Department of Theatre and Dance, where she teaches and mentors both the stage management and theatre education students.

Studying Stage Management at UIUC led to an exciting array of opportunities, including working with Cedar Lake Contemporary Ballet Company in New York City, supporting Anne Bogart/SITI Company in residence at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, and touring internationally with The Builders Association production of *Continuous City*.

After graduate school, Goodwin served as director of education and touring for *Voices of the South* theatre company in Memphis. In 2012, she became the production manager for SummerFest Theatre Company in Lexington, Kentucky, and in 2014, Goodwin became a founding member of the AthensWest Theatre Company—a professional Equity theatre company where she served as production manager for the first three seasons. Since moving to middle Tennessee, she stage-managed Nashville Shakespeare Festival’s production of *Julius Caesar* in 2019, and in 2021 she co-created PlaySpace—a grant-supported new play development workshop, which commissioned *The Willows* by playwright Sharyn Rothstein.

Goodwin has a long history with the Tennessee Governor’s School for the Arts (GSFTA), having started as a counselor in 1997. She became theatre chair in 2021 before being named the GSFTA director in 2022. She happily serves the talented student-artists of Tennessee each summer on the MTSU campus.



Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand

*Department of Philosophy and
Religious Studies*

Promoted to Professor

Jenna Gray-Hildenbrand joined the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at MTSU in 2012 as an assistant professor of Religious Studies and as a member of the Women's and Gender Studies faculty.

Gray-Hildenbrand earned a B.A. in both Religion and Women's Studies from Western Michigan University, an M.A. in Religious Studies from the University of Colorado–Boulder, and a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from the University of California–Santa Barbara. Her research focuses on religion and law in the United States, with a specialization in the criminalization of religious practice.

Immediately upon her arrival at MTSU, Gray-Hildenbrand began developing the Religious Studies program. She created a General Education course that utilizes both in-class activities and site visits to local religious communities to provide MTSU students with firsthand experience of the religious diversity in middle Tennessee. Together with Rebekka King, Gray-Hildenbrand created the B.A. and B.S. programs in Religious Studies at MTSU, and they serve as the program coordinators.

Gray-Hildenbrand won the MTSU Experiential Teaching Outstanding Faculty Award (2017), and the Outstanding Teaching Award (2020).

Gray-Hildenbrand has earned two multi-year, external collaborative grants in support of teaching advancements. The first \$30,000 grant (2016–18) aimed to share intellectual resources among three new Religious Studies programs (Clemson, University of North Florida, and MTSU) to cultivate valuable classroom learning experiences. The second \$30,000 grant (2019–21) created a learning community of 12 undergraduate professors from different institutions. The results of this research are published in *Teaching Critical Religious Studies: Pedagogy and Critique in the Classroom* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022).



Mei Han

School of Music

Promoted to Professor

Mei Han is the founding director of the MTSU Center for Chinese Music and Culture. She received her doctoral and master's degrees in Ethnomusicology from the University of British Columbia and a master's degree in Musicology from the National Arts Academy of China.

Han is recognized as one of the world's premiere zheng (Chinese 21-string zither) artists and scholars. She has created a body of contemporary works rooted in Chinese traditional culture that propel the zheng into new dimensions of musical expression. Her unique position as an international performer and scholar was recognized by Bruno Nettl in *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-Three Discussions* (2015), the primary textbook for the discipline.

Han's academic research fields include the music of China and East Asia and cross-cultural music communication. She has published widely, presented at numerous international conferences, and lectured at higher institutions globally.

Han studied with legendary zheng masters and toured with the most prestigious music ensemble in China. Moving to the West, she has explored the zheng in many new genres, including new music, chamber music, free improvisation, electro-acoustic, and world music. Her boundary-breaking practice is a case study in *Sound Changes: Improvisation and Transcultural Difference* (Michael Hefley, the University of Michigan Press, 2021). Han has performed at prominent venues and international festivals, as a featured artist with symphonies, and on concert tours to more than a dozen countries. She has recorded eight albums, receiving three award nominations.

In 2016, Han created the MTSU Center for Chinese Music and Culture, the first of its kind in North America. Her mission is to bridge cultures and create opportunities for educational and artistic exchange for MTSU students and faculty. She works with numerous music schools, art institutions, and educational organizations to create a network for cultural exchange and contribute to student success at MTSU.



Rebekka King

*Department of Philosophy and
Religious Studies*

Promoted to Professor

Rebekka King holds a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto, an M.A. from Queen's University, and a B.A. from Bishop's University. At MTSU, King teaches courses on global Christianity, the Bible, women and gender studies, ethnographic methods, religion and film, and the academic discipline of religious studies. In addition to her work in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, King is resident faculty at the University Honors College, where she serves as a committee chair for Honors theses and has taught the UH 3000 – University Honors Lecture Series course.

Trained as a cultural anthropologist, King's research examines the negotiation of boundaries within contemporary North American Christianity. Her first book, *The New Heretics: Skepticism, Secularism, and Progressive Christianity* (NYU Press, 2023), outlines the development of progressive Christianity as a variety of Christianity that is simultaneously secular and religious. Her second major project, which has received funding from the American Academy of Religion and MTSU's Faculty Research and Creative Activity (FRCAC) program, explores the syntheses of Judaism, indigenous religions, and Christianity within a movement known as Jewish Affinity Christianity. She has two edited volumes, *Key Categories in the Study of Religion* (Equinox, 2022) and *Representing Religion in Film* (co-edited with Tenzan Eaghll, Bloomsbury, 2022). Before MTSU, she held a postdoctoral fellowship at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

King currently serves as the president of the North American Association for the Study of Religion and is a fellow of the Center for Critical Research on Religion in Boston. She previously served as co-chair of the Sociology of Religion program unit of the American Academy of Religion and as an editor for *Critical Research on Religion*. She has won numerous awards, including MTSU Outstanding Honors Faculty, MTSU Outstanding Teaching Award, MTSU Outstanding EXL Faculty Award, American Academy of Religion Individual Research Grant, and a "Teaching Against Islamophobia" Fellowship from the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion.



Darren E. Levin

Department of Theatre and Dance

Promoted to Professor

Darren E. Levin holds a B.F.A. in Theatre Design and Technology with Honors from Missouri State University and an M.F.A. in Theatrical Design (Lighting Design) from the University of Texas.

Prior to joining the faculty at MTSU, Levin served as the assistant technical director and lighting supervisor for McCain Auditorium at Kansas State University. He has also worked with and designed for Cedar Point Live Entertainment and Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts, and he toured North America as an electrician with Feld Entertainment's production Disney on Ice: Let's Celebrate.

Levin's creative activity encompasses over 135 productions as lighting designer for theatre, dance, and opera. Credits with Nashville Repertory Theatre include *Violet*, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, *Ragtime* (First Night Nashville Honors – Outstanding Lighting Design), *Every Brilliant Thing*, *Pipeline* (First Night Nashville Nominee – Outstanding Lighting Design), *Avenue Q*, *Topdog/Underdog*, *Smart People*, *Posterity* (Regional Premiere), *Good Monsters* (World Premiere), and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Credits with Studio Tenn Theatre Company include *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* and *Camelot* (First Night Nashville Nominee – Outstanding Lighting Design).

Levin also designs with Black Hills Playhouse, Green Mountain Opera Festival, Theatre West Summer Repertory, Mountain Rep Theatre, and Cedar Point Live Entertainment, with credits including *Legally Blonde*, *Grease*, *The 39 Steps*, *Side Show*, *Songs for a New World*, *The Music Man*, *Footloose*, *9 to 5*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *La Cenerentola*, and *She Loves Me*.

Levin is a member of the United States Institute of Theatre Technology, where he has served as a council member for the Essential Skills for the Entertainment Technician (eSET) program as well as the vice commissioner for communications and vice commissioner for equity, diversity, and inclusion of the Lighting Design and Technology Commission. He currently serves as the Lighting Design and Technology Commission liaison to professional organizations.

He also is a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 205 in Austin, Texas, and United Scenic Artists Local USA 829, the union representing designers and scenic artists in the entertainment industry, where he currently serves as a member of the Central Region Lighting Design Exam Committee.



Aliou Ly

Department of History

Promoted to Professor

Aliou Ly has a Ph.D. in African History from the University of California–Davis, a master’s degree in History from California State University–Fullerton, and a B.A. in History from Cheikh Anta Diop University in Senegal.

He began his U.S. academic career as an athletic academic advisor at Cal State–Fullerton. He then taught as an adjunct at California State University–Sonoma in 2011, before being appointed in 2012 as assistant professor of History at Middle Tennessee State University. In 2016, he developed the MTSU faculty-led education abroad program “History in Senegal” in his home country.

Ly was promoted to associate professor in 2018. He served as interim director of the Africana Studies program during spring 2019, and as vice-chair and chair of the MTSU General Education Committee for three years (2018–21). Since fall 2019, he has been the History Department undergraduate program director.

Ly has published and presented widely. He specializes in the political history of Guinea Bissau, with a focus on the meaning of women’s participation in national liberation struggles and anti-colonial movements. In this context, he examines the ambiguous relations between African national liberation movements and their female members’ movements for women’s rights and emancipation. For many years, he has practiced a research interest in the Haitian revolution and the dissemination of the idea of this revolution throughout African political and intellectual circles.

Among Ly’s awards are the MTSU Outstanding Teaching Award in General Education and the President’s Commission on the Status of Women Curriculum Integration Grant. During his tenure at MTSU, he has received a congratulatory letter from the Office of the President and three congratulatory letters from the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment and Academic Services.



Becky McIntyre

Department of History

Promoted to Research Instructor

Becky McIntyre is a research professor in MTSU's Department of History and coordinator of the Reading History Initiative, a signature MTSU program that links reading enhancement courses with U.S. History survey courses. McIntyre began teaching at MTSU in 2004 and served as the director of the Middle Tennessee History Day competition for six years before being appointed as coordinator of the Reading History Initiative.

She received her Ph.D. in U.S. History from the University of Alabama and has published articles and essays in numerous academic works on the intersection of tourism and historical memory, including her book, *Souvenirs of the Old South: Northern Tourism and Southern Mythology*, published by the University Press of Florida in 2011. Besides researching the history of tourism, McIntyre publishes in the scholarship of teaching and learning, including an article on historical role-playing, student self-efficacy, and the reading student.

McIntyre has received several grants, including a 2018 Student Engagement, Retention, and Success (SERS) grant for creating a new corequisite reading and history program. In 2020, she was part of a grant team that implemented Open Educational Resources (OER) for General Education History courses. In 2022, McIntyre was awarded the Faculty Student Success Award from the College of Liberal Arts.



Ashleigh E. McKinzie

*Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Ashleigh E. McKinzie received her Ph.D. in Sociology in 2017 from the University of Georgia. She uses feminist and critical theory and a variety of methodological approaches to examine the intersection of inequalities in a range of contexts such as disaster aftermaths and in religious settings. Her current research investigates sexual violence against women and girls in evangelical contexts.

McKinzie has published and presented on recovery from disaster, climate change, gender violence, mental health, intersectionality, and media representations. Her research has been published in *Social Forces*, *The Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*, *Sociological Forum*, *Sociology Compass*, *Environmental Sociology*, *Symbolic Interaction*, and others. She is currently working on a book manuscript about gender violence in evangelical contexts.

McKinzie has received a variety of teaching awards, including MTSU's College of Liberal Arts Mentoring Award and MTSU's Outstanding Teaching Award. She teaches various courses related to her research interests with attention to how to use sociology to engender social justice and social change.



La Shonda Mims

Department of History

Tenure and Promoted to Associate Professor

La Shonda Mims earned an M.A. in History at the University of North Carolina–Charlotte and a Ph.D. in History at the University of Georgia. She began her career as a public historian working for several museums, including the Connecticut Historical Society, the Harriet Beecher Stowe House Museum, and the

Charlotte Museum of History.

In 2014, Mims was invited by President Obama’s Department of the Interior to serve on the National Park Service’s Scholars Roundtable on the Preservation and Interpretation of LGBTQ Historic Places. Concerned with the intersections of gender, race, region, and queer identity, her book, *Drastic Dykes and Accidental Activists*, published by the University of North Carolina Press, examines lesbian life in Atlanta and in Charlotte, North Carolina. Her research has been published in the *Journal of Women’s History* and the *Journal of Urban History*. Mims is currently at work on a major new research project, which interrogates the transnational history of Pentecostalism and queer identity.

She has served on the board of the American Historical Association’s Committee on LGBT History and currently sits on the board of advisors for the University of Georgia Press’ Politics and Culture in the Twentieth-Century South series and the community based online archive OutHistory. Mims has won numerous awards and fellowships, including the Coordinating Council for Women in History’s Catherine Prelinger Award, a \$20,000 prize in support of her research.

She has presented her work at conferences in Ireland, the United Kingdom, and the U.S., including the American Historical Association conference, Organization of American Historians conference, and the National Women’s Studies Association conference. Mims has appeared on radio and podcasts and in the editorial pages of *The Washington Post*. At MTSU, she teaches the history of race, women, gender, and sexuality.



Soraya Nogueira

*Department of World Languages,
Literatures, and Cultures*

Promoted to Professor

Soraya Nogueira received her Ph.D. in Portuguese and Spanish from Vanderbilt University in 1999. She joined the faculty at MTSU the same year. She currently teaches Spanish and Portuguese languages and classes on Latin American literatures and cultures in the World

Languages, Literatures, and Cultures Department. She developed the interdisciplinary Portuguese Studies minor and serves as the minor advisor.

Nogueira has directed and taught in study abroad programs in Brazil and Spain. In 2010, she received the MTSU Outstanding Teacher Award.

Nogueira widely presented and published on the topics of the grotesque, carnival, oppression, and dictatorship in Latin American literatures. In 2003, she received the prestigious Celso Cunha Award from the Brazilian Academy of Letters for her contribution to criticism in comparative literature in her book *O Grotesco em Miguel Jorge e Julio Cortázar* (*The Grotesque in Miguel Jorge and Julio Cortázar*). More recently, Nogueira's research has branched into the area of Brazilian popular culture and Spanish language acquisition.



Michael V. Paulauskas

Department of History

Promoted to Master Instructor

Michael V. Paulauskas received his Ph.D. and M.A. in History from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He received his B.A. in History from Temple University. Since he began to work at MTSU in 2012, Paulauskas has taught survey courses on U.S. history and Western civilization and upper-division and graduate courses on Russian history and the Cold War.

Paulauskas was part of the faculty work group to develop the Reading History Initiative at MTSU, and he has worked as one of the History faculty dedicated to these classes full time since they were unrolled in 2015. He has served as a member of the History Department General Education Committee and as an adjunct member of the graduate faculty, and he has taken part in several Faculty Learning Communities (FLC) through the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center, including as co-facilitator of an FLC on Plagiarism in 2014–15.

Paulauskas also has taken a prominent leadership role in his department's online General Education program, having assumed the position of course co-developer for both U.S. History I and II in 2020. As part of this effort, he aided History Department faculty new to online education in the transition to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, Paulauskas won the MTSU Award for Outstanding Teaching in General Education.

Paulauskas is an active scholar who brings his research interests into the classroom to encourage student interest in history. He tells students that his role is to challenge their ideas, help them to analyze their assumptions and conclusions in a critical manner, and improve their ability to support their arguments with appropriate evidence and analysis. He aims to help all students to gain confidence in the practice of “doing history” and to learn what an MTSU degree in History can do for their careers.

Paulauskas is grateful for his outstanding colleagues and to the wonderful students he has been privileged to work with over the past decade at MTSU.



Ashley Riley Sousa

Department of History

Promoted to Professor

Ashley Riley Sousa earned her B.A. in History from University of California–Davis before completing her M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. in History from Yale University. Her work has appeared in the journal *Ethnohistory*, the *Pacific Historical Review*, and the *Journal of Genocide Research* and as chapters in the edited volumes *A*

Cultural History of Genocide: The Long Nineteenth Century, published by Bloomsbury, and *Violence and Indigenous Communities: Confronting the Past, Engaging the Present*, published by Northwestern University Press.

Alongside her scholarship, Sousa is also committed to engaging with audiences outside the classroom, appearing on several history podcasts (most notably *The Road to Now*) and radio programs and giving interviews to newspapers, including the *Los Angeles Times*. She has consulted on historical role-playing games and popular reference books, as well as giving talks at the Rutherford County Library and for Department of Veterans Affairs multicultural training sessions.

Since joining the faculty at MTSU, Sousa's proudest accomplishments have been in her mentorship of students, especially the graduate students she has served as graduate director in the History Department since 2019. She has helped students establish history careers and advance to prestigious Ph.D. programs, including the Public History Ph.D. program here at MTSU. While weathering the pandemic, she has helped grow the History M.A. program and promote opportunities for History graduate students on campus and in the community.



Tiffany B. Saul

*Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Promoted to Research Associate Professor*

Tiffany B. Saul earned her B.S. in Anthropology and M.S. in Biology from Middle Tennessee State University and her Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Tennessee. She is a forensic anthropologist and routinely consults with local and state law enforcement and medical examiners to assist with the recovery and identification of unknown human remains. She has been awarded numerous grants for her research using stable isotope analysis as a tool for human identification.

Saul's projects have included collaborations with universities and labs across the country, including the University of Utah, Arizona State University, and Oak Ridge National Laboratory. At MTSU, she established the Forensic Anthropology Stable Isotope Laboratory, where she is working to develop new methods for identifying human remains. Her current projects are collaborative efforts with international humanitarian organizations across the globe in Colombia, Peru, and France.

In addition to her own research, Saul mentors undergraduate and graduate student projects in forensic science and anthropology. She serves as the faculty advisor for the Middle Tennessee Forensic Science Society and serves her peers in the University research community as a member of the University Council for Sponsored Scholarship. Saul is nationally recognized as an expert in her field, and in 2020 she was appointed to the National Institute of Standards and Technology Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science to develop national standards and best practices in forensic anthropology. Since 2021, she has led an international forensic archaeology field training program to assist with the recovery of missing U.S. service personnel from World War II.



Benjamin Sawyer

Department of History

Promoted to Master Instructor

Benjamin Sawyer has taught in MTSU's Department of History since 2013. He has won multiple accolades and awards for his work at MTSU, including the Student Government Association's John T. Bragg Distinguished Service Award, the College of Liberal Arts' Faculty Student Mentoring Award, Fraternity and Sorority Life's Faculty Member of the Year, and the J. Harmon Home Team Teacher of the Month Award.

Sawyer's academic work focuses on the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and his publications explore how the rivalry between the two countries shaped the meaning of capitalism and communism. For the 2023–24 academic year, Sawyer will be a visiting scholar at Vanderbilt University, where he will serve as co-director of Vanderbilt's East Europe and Eurasian Seminar.

Sawyer is committed to outreach and public engagement. Since 2016, he and his friend Bob Crawford (of The Avett Brothers) have hosted *The Road to Now*, a history and politics show. The podcast has given Sawyer and Crawford the opportunity to share their conversations with a lineup of brilliant guests, including Annette Gordon-Reed, Heather Cox Richardson, and Ken Burns.

Sawyer also has made frequent appearances in media, including *Forbes*, *Roll Call*, *SiriusXM Politics*, and MTSU's *Out of the Blue*. His March 2022 piece for *The Washington Post's* Made by History section, "Russia Is Threatening a Move That Will Haunt Its Economy for Decades," was the No. 2 trending story on Apple News and the most read piece on *The Post's* website the weekend following its publication.

Sawyer is also an experienced public speaker. He has addressed prospective students at MTSU's Preview Day recruitment event, alumni at the 2019 Alumni Summer College, and inductees of Phi Kappa Phi as the honor society's invited speaker in 2022. Outside the University, he has spoken to a wide variety of audiences and has been an invited speaker at the National Conference of State Legislatures' Legislative Summit every year since 2019, which allows him to share his historical expertise with an audience of lawmakers from every U.S. state and territory, and representatives from countries around the world.



Xiaowei Shi

Department of Communication Studies

Promoted to Professor

Xiaowei Shi joined MTSU as an assistant professor of Communication Studies in 2010. She earned a Ph.D. from Purdue University, an M.A. from DePaul University, and a B.A. from Beijing Language University.

Shi has taught courses in communication research methods, romantic relationship communication, interpersonal communication, communication theory, organizational assessments, and communication for organizational effectiveness. Shi has a sustained record of excellence in classroom teaching, and her commitment to teaching is evident in her attentiveness to the needs of her students and her dynamism in the classroom.

Shi also teaches in the M.A. in Liberal Arts (MALA) program and the Honors College, directing MALA capstone projects and Honors theses. She served as a mentor for numerous undergraduate students' research and conference presentations and actively collaborates with students on research. Shi has been honored for her commitment to students by being named Influential Faculty through Phi Kappa Phi. She has recently presented with her students at the National Communication Association (NCA) annual conference on such timely topics as "Communication Effects on Stress and Resilience Development" and "Culture, Resilience, and Communication: Improving Physical and Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic."

With numerous peer-reviewed journal articles to her credit, she has established a body of work that has garnered a solid reputation in her area of specialization in interpersonal influence, persuasive reasoning, and conflict management. Shi has committed herself to deepening her research to develop a theoretical framework for conflict communication—Argumentative Interaction Management (AIM). This effort resulted in the publication of the book *Unquestioned Ease: Confronting Automaticity in Everyday Communication* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022). Shi won the Top Paper Award in 2016 in the Communication Apprehension and Competence Division of the National Communication Association. She is also asked for her expertise on relationships by media outlets, including *The Tennessean*, *The Daily News Journal*, and *Wallethub.com*.

With a book project with SAGE Publishing in progress, Shi has maintained an active research agenda in her area of influence and reasoning in the contexts of close relationships and workplace communication.



Suzanne Sutherland

Department of History

Promoted to Professor

Suzanne Sutherland earned her B.A. in History from the University of California–Santa Cruz and her M.A. and Ph.D. in History from Stanford University. Her research focuses on war, scholarship, and culture in 16th- and 17th-century Europe. In addition to having published peer-reviewed articles and a co-edited volume of essays,

her book on the history of military contracting, *The Rise of the Military Entrepreneur: War, Diplomacy, and Knowledge in Habsburg Europe*, was published by Cornell University Press in 2022. In support of her research, she received a Fulbright fellowship, two Faculty Research and Creative Activity grants from MTSU, a National Endowment for the Humanities summer stipend, and Stanford University's UPS Endowment Fund, among others.

Sutherland views her most important role as helping students get to know and explore a wider world. For that reason, she loves to analyze the historical societies of Europe alongside her students, teaching a range of subjects that includes the Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution, Enlightenment, and French Revolution. In 2023, she brought MTSU students to Europe when she designed, organized, and led a monthlong summer history and culture program in Vienna and Prague called "Heart of Europe." She has employed other innovative pedagogies in the classroom, including intensive role-play games, teaching with Wikipedia, and problem-based learning, and has developed an online Open Educational Resource (OER) General Education History course.

In recent years, Sutherland has gotten more involved in administrative and service leadership positions at MTSU and beyond. After completing three years of service on the Faculty Senate (one of those years as recording secretary), she was elected Faculty Senate president for the 2024–25 academic year. Since 2019, she has also served as General Education director in the History Department and as a subject editor for an innovative scholarly platform, Routledge Resources Online—The Renaissance World, which uses digital tools to help interpret some of the most exciting new scholarship on the Renaissance for undergraduate and graduate student readers.



Angela Tipps

School of Music

Promoted to Master Instructor

Angela Tipps has taught at MTSU for 25 years, first in a tenure track position, then as an adjunct, and then as a full-time temporary instructor. A 1985 graduate of MTSU (Bachelor of Music in organ performance), she now conducts choir rehearsals in the same room (SFA 117) in which she sang and played piano as an undergraduate.

Tipps conducts the SOAL (Soprano-Alto) and TEBA (Tenor-Bass) Chorales, teaches basic and choral conducting, coordinates the music appreciation courses in the School of Music, and often serves as musical director for the Department of Theatre and Dance.

She is also musical director of the Middle Tennessee Choral Society, a community choir made up of former MTSU students and other singers who perform major choral works with orchestra each semester. For 21 years, she has been the organist and director of music at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Murfreesboro. She and her husband, Dale (MTSU '83), a workers' compensation judge for the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, have two children: Virginia (MTSU '20—a fourth-generation Blue Raider), who is completing an M.F.A. in Stage and Production Management at Carnegie Mellon University, and Sam, a Civil Engineering major at the University of Memphis.



Zhen Wang

*Department of Political Science
and International Relations*

Promoted to Professor

Zhen Wang teaches undergraduate and graduate courses on comparative politics and Chinese and East Asian politics in the Department of Political Science and International Relations. Her current research examines the Chinese Communist Party's institutions of personnel management, with a particular focus on the cadre performance evaluation system.

She has published widely in journals such as *The China Quarterly*, *East Asia: An International Quarterly*, and the *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, as well as a methodological case study at SAGE Research Methods. She has received internal grants, including two Faculty Research and Creative Activity awards, now known as MT-IGO, and an external grant from the Translation Fund for Chinese Academic Research of the National Social Science Foundation in China.

Wang obtained her Ph.D. in Political Science (2013) from the University of Minnesota, a master's in Public Administration (2004) from Northern Arizona University, and a B.A. in English Language and Literature (2001) from the University of International Relations in Beijing. She also interned as a graduate assistant at the China Village Elections Project of The Carter Center (Atlanta) in summer 2003.



Jennifer Woodward

*Department of Political Science
and International Relations*

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Jennifer Woodward earned a Ph.D. and M.A. in Political Science at the University at Albany, State University of New York (SUNY), where she also received a Certificate in Public Administration (Women and Public Policy), and has a B.S. in Political Science from Tennessee

Technological University. During her career, Woodward has worked at the College of William and Mary, the American Bar Foundation, the New York Latino Research and Resources Network, the New York State Department of Civil Service (Public Management Institute and Staffing Services), and the University at Albany, SUNY. In 2015, she became a research fellow for the Center for Policy Research at the University at Albany, SUNY.

Since joining MTSU's Department of Political Science and International Relations in 2016, Woodward has served as the faculty advisor of the MTSU Mock Trial program and has been recognized by students as "a person at MTSU who makes a real difference to our students." The MTSU chapter of Phi Kappa Phi also recognized her as "an influential faculty member who encourages her students to strive for academic excellence."

Woodward's scholarship focuses on the development and implementation of civil rights laws in education and employment. By looking at the potential of law, courts, and government agencies to shape and be shaped by society, she evaluates the everyday encounters between individuals and the law. Her research includes publications on the supply and demand for pedagogy training among political scientists, the implementation of school desegregation in Nashville-Davidson County, and compliance with bilingual education laws in New York. She has also published on the formation of the National Organization for Women, interpretations of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the early institutional capacity of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.



Chris A. Bacon

*School of Journalism and Strategic Media
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Chris Bacon has a B.A. in Electronic Journalism from Murray State University; a Master of Science in Journalism from the University of Illinois; and a Ph.D. in Mass Communication from the University of Kansas. His professional career began in the television news industry, where he worked as an on-air sports

reporter, anchor, and photographer before moving into the marketing and public relations field.

His academic career started when he was a graduate assistant at the University of Kansas, teaching courses in video production. While pursuing his Ph.D., he switched to a full-time role as an executive producer for KUJH-TV, the university's student-run TV station. Under his leadership, the station won numerous awards including the Signature Station Award from the Broadcast Education Association, Best TV Newscast from the Kansas Association of Broadcasters, and a Pinnacle Award for Best Special Events Program from the College Media Association.

Bacon came to MTSU in 2017 as an assistant professor in the School of Journalism and Strategic Media. He currently teaches courses in sports media and broadcast journalism. In fall 2019, he developed a new Sports Media concentration, which is now the largest concentration in the school. He also serves as the chair for the Sports Division of the Broadcast Education Association.

Outside of MTSU, Bacon leads communications and media relations efforts for Music City Baseball. This is an organization of primarily Tennessee business, sports, music, and community leaders that is committed to bringing a Major League Baseball franchise to Nashville with the name Nashville Stars. The organization has a vast list of advisors that include music artists Justin Timberlake, Darius Rucker, and Luke Combs.



Michelle Conceison

*Department of Recording Industry
Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor*

Michelle Conceison holds a B.A. in English and Ethical Philosophy from Tufts University and a Master of Business Administration from Simmons University, both in Boston. She instructs undergraduate and graduate courses including artist management, marketing of recordings, concert promotion and touring, and music entrepreneurship and strategic planning for the arts. She is chair of MTSU's Graduate Council and is on the Faculty Senate.

Conceison is a practicing artist manager, operating Mmgmt—a marketing and management company she founded in 2004 that specializes in folk, Americana, and roots music. Her clients have been nominated for Grammy Awards, International Folk Music Awards, and Americana UK Awards, and have won Juno Awards, East Coast Music Awards, International Bluegrass Music Awards, and others. Conceison serves as global chair of mentorship for Women in Music and co-founded the Nashville chapter. She served as president of Folk Alliance International and secretary of the International Bluegrass Music Association, where she chaired the task force on diversity, equity, and inclusion. She won the Spirit of Folk Award (2017), was in Leadership Bluegrass (2019), and has been selected for Leadership Music this year.

She has authored several papers significant in advancement of the music industry and she wrote a chapter in a textbook co-authored by MTSU colleagues Amy Macy and Tammy Donham, *Recorded Music Marketing: How Music Companies Brand and Market Artists*.

Conceison has been interviewed by news media as a music business expert—including appearances on NewsChannel 5 (CBS) and WKRN News 2 (ABC) in Nashville, and in newspapers, magazines, and podcasts. She regularly speaks at music industry conferences worldwide.



Richard Lewis

Department of Media Arts

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Richard Lewis earned a B.A. in Fine Art Drawing from Xavier University in Cincinnati and an M.F.A. in Animation from the Savannah College of Art and Design. He moved to Los Angeles to create visual effects, titles, motion graphics, illustrations, and matte paintings for numerous projects, films, and television shows, including the *X-Files* hi-def conversion, the *Unsolved Mysteries* repackage, two seasons of *Life After People* on the History Channel, *Vanished* with Beth Holloway on Lifetime, and five years of *Art Mann Presents* on ASXtv/HDNET. He also directed a team of animators for two seasons of *The High Fructose Adventures of Annoying Orange* on Cartoon Network.

Since coming to MTSU in 2017, Lewis has taught a wide range of animation courses and has certified each with the MT Engage designation. He has incorporated client-based projects into courses, including having students work on modeling historic visualizations for “Hidden Town in 3D,” a digital history project, and create visual effects for the award-winning short film ROAM. Along with curricular committee and development work, he spearheaded the creation of the new Motion Design concentration in Video and Film Production, utilizing courses from both Media Arts and the Department of Art and Design.

Lewis has been working to grow the esports footprint at MTSU since taking over as the advisor for the Esports Club. For the past five years, he has served as the curator for the annual Faculty Submitted Student Work Exhibition hosted by the ACM SIGGRAPH Education Committee and has presented his work at the ACM SIGGRAPH conference. He co-directed the animated virtual reality short film *What Took You So Long*, which received the U.S. Broadcast Education Association Best of Festival Interactive Media Award, and has been assisting with projects for the new MT Imagine Animation Studio.



Jennifer Bailey Woodard

*Department of Journalism and Strategic Media
Promoted to Professor*

Jennifer Bailey Woodard is assistant dean of the College of Media and Entertainment and teaches in the School of Journalism and Strategic Media. She joined the MTSU faculty after completing an M.A. in Mass Communication at the University of Georgia. She received her Ph.D. in Mass Communication at Indiana University–Bloomington. While attending IU, she concentrated on scholarship that would enhance her ability to teach students the value of a diversified newsroom and the role that technology would play in their future job opportunities.

Woodard teaches courses on media convergence, digital writing, podcasting, audio journalism, women in the media, and race, class, and gender. She has chaired or served on the thesis committees of more than 25 students. In 2021, she was awarded the John Pleas Faulty Award for excellence in teaching, research, and service. That same year, she and colleague Ken Blake created the “Come to Voice” project that expands data, media, and social media skills in partnership with the Rutherford County Boys and Girls Club during a one-week summer day camp at MTSU.

Woodard has published articles and reviews in such journals as *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *Journal of Black Studies*, *Journal of Communication*, and *The Communicator*. Her scholarship focuses on the mediated representations of African Americans, especially African American women; curriculum construction; and inclusive education. She has designed and implemented diversity, equity, and inclusion seminars and training for organizations such as NewsChannel 5, Permanent General, Vanderbilt Medical Center, Ernst and Young, and the Tennessee Association of Broadcasters. She is a member of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, where she has served on numerous committees, including chairing the Minorities and Communication division. She is also a member of the Broadcast Education Association, where she chairs the Multicultural Division.



Christina M. Cobb

Department of University Studies

Tenured and Promoted to Associate Professor

Christina M. Cobb teaches mathematics, first-year seminar, and graduate Professional Studies courses. She earned a B.S. and M.S. in Mathematics and a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction at Tennessee State University. She previously taught middle school mathematics in Metro Nashville Public Schools.

Cobb strives to reach all students at every level and to create an inclusive learning environment for all her courses. These efforts have been recognized by the Outstanding Teacher Award in General Education at MTSU in 2022, the Outstanding Teacher Award at MTSU in 2019, and the Outstanding Faculty in Learning Support Award from the Tennessee Association for Student Success and Retention in 2021. Cobb also has been cited as a “Person Who Made a Difference” by MTSU graduating seniors multiple times.

Cobb was a recipient of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities’ High Impact Practices Grant and a Student Engagement, Retention, and Success Grant, for which she served as co-principal investigator for the Mentoring and Mathematics (M2) program. She was also named the 2021–2023 Inclusive Teaching Fellow with MTSU’s Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center.

Cobb currently serves as the national co-chair of the National Organization for Student Success Mathematics Network and is the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee chair with the Tennessee Association for Student Success and Retention. She also serves on the committee for Tennessee Girls in STEM at MTSU. In 2022, she launched her nonprofit platform EducatHer, where she has taught women across the nation through workshops, book clubs, college mentoring, and more.



Meredith Anne “M.A.” Higgs

Department of University Studies

Promoted to Professor

Meredith Anne “M.A.” Higgs strongly believes in lifelong learning and has earned a B.S. in Molecular Biology from Vanderbilt University; an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, M.Ed. in Administration and Supervision, and Ed.S. from MTSU; and an Ed.D. from Peabody

College of Vanderbilt University. She also has earned a variety of certificates and graduate certificates across many academic disciplines.

Higgs began teaching as a full-time faculty member at MTSU in 1997 in Developmental Studies Mathematics and has continued teaching prescribed mathematics, freshman seminar, courses in the undergraduate and graduate Professional Studies degree programs, and Education courses. Her classroom teaching is enhanced through her support of students who are academically at-risk, nontraditional, and distance learners. For her efforts, she has won many local, state, and national teaching awards, including the MTSU Outstanding Teaching Award, the Rutherford County Passionate Educator Award, the Association for Continuing Higher Education-South Teaching Award, and the national Gladys R. Shaw Award.

Higgs is highly regarded for her energetic conference presentations and serves her field as the National Organization for Student Success Mathematics co-chair. Her publications include journal articles, a book chapter, and two open educational resources books currently in use as textbooks in several courses.



Karen Nourse Reed

Department of User Services

Promoted to Professor

Karen Nourse Reed holds a B.A. in Modern Foreign Language from James Madison University, a post-baccalaureate certificate in Information Systems from Virginia Commonwealth University, a Master of Library and Information Studies from the University of North Carolina–Greensboro, a Master of Science in Education from Radford University, and a Ph.D. in Literacy Studies from Middle Tennessee State University. Her career in information retrieval and organization spans more than 25 years and began with her work as a computer programmer within the banking industry.

Reed transitioned into librarianship in 2008, working as a middle school librarian at a Title I designated school in rural southwestern Virginia. It was in this environment that she developed a practical understanding of the wide range of reading comprehension proficiency among students, as well as the factors that contribute to student academic success. Her experience in K–12 librarianship prepared her to become Walker Library's education librarian in 2013. In this role, Reed served as both the manager of a library unit, the Curriculum Collection, as well as the library's academic liaison to the College of Education and Department of Psychology. In 2019, Reed was tenured and promoted to associate professor. In fall 2022, she was appointed to the newly created position of research and data librarian for Walker Library.

Reed has published in leading journals in her field, including *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, *School Library Research*, and *School Libraries Worldwide*. She has presented at the state, national, and international level. She has collaborated on research and professional development projects with librarian colleagues at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. Reed has served on multiple committees within the Association of College and Research Libraries, including an elected position within the Education and Behavior Science Section, and is currently serving as a conference planner for the Southeast Data Librarian Symposium.

