
INTRODUCTION

As President of Middle Tennessee State University, I am delighted to greet each of you at the beginning of this new academic year. I recently had the pleasure of formally addressing our University freshmen and their families at the annual University Convocation and our outstanding faculty at the Fall Faculty meeting. By all indications, we have selected an outstanding class of very capable and enthusiastic students to join our existing community of scholars, and our faculty and staff are prepared for yet another exciting and productive year.

I want each of us to remain committed to the advancement of our mission and the three primary pillars of our Academic Master Plan: Academic Quality, Student Centeredness, and Partnerships. We will continue to refine our understanding of these key aspects of our strategic plan such that each College, department and administrative unit is able to fully articulate how they are contributing to their advancement and success.

You are at Middle Tennessee State University at an exciting time in its history *in spite of the economic challenges*, and you will play a vital role in the ongoing development of its future. We are an institution that boasts numerous outstanding faculty members, researchers, staff, and administrators whose individual accomplishments speak to our commitment to academic quality and student success. But, our individual efforts count for very little if we fail to work together toward common goals and institutional objectives and forget to acknowledge the value of teamwork and collegiality.

I'm excited about being a team player and remain extremely proud and humbled to have the privilege of leading this outstanding team. This is a new academic year, one with new challenges and new opportunities. But with your collective help and support, this will also be a year of outstanding new achievements and incredible new possibilities. Thank you for your service and commitment to MTSU.

Sidney A. McPhee



NEWS AND INFORMATION

Fall 2010 Enrollment

The preliminary projection for Fall 2010 enrollment is approaching a record of 25,850 students. The official enrollment numbers for this semester will be announced on the 14th day of classes.

University Convocation

The ninth annual University Convocation took place Sunday, August 29, in Murphy



Center. This event, which was created to formally introduce new freshmen to the MTSU academic community, featured speaker Warren St. John, author of *Outcasts United*. Mr. St. John documents the struggles of the refugee community in a small Georgia town of Clarkston. Two of the central themes of the book seem particularly important to our new students and their families. The first is the question of how we treat our neighbors when they look, speak, and live differently from the way we do. The second is the universal struggles that are a part

of acclimating to a new way of life. Along with St. John's Convocation presentation, he appeared at Linebaugh Public Library and interacted with students in the College of Mass Communication on the first day of classes.

Appreciation and recognition go to the faculty members, administrators, and student leaders who participated in the event and to Dr. Deb Sells and the staff from the Division of Student Affairs for their planning efforts.

Budget Update

Thanks to the hard work and efforts of our faculty, staff and administration, we have continued the process of implementing the series of recommendations outlined in our *Positioning the University for the Future* initiative. We are now prepared to continue the operation of the University without large scale lay-offs and with minimal disruption of academic programs and instructional offerings as we approach July 1, 2011, when the federal stimulus funds are no longer available.

The University is prepared to make the required \$31 million reduction by June 30, 2011. After this reduction, our state appropriation will have dropped from \$100.0 million in FY 2007-08 to \$69.9 million. While this is a painful process, we will operate within the reduced state appropriations, from a combination of budget cuts, moderate fee increases and managed enrollment growth.

The availability of federal stimulus funds has allowed us to manage these major reductions in an orderly and strategic manner. Overall, much of the \$16.5 million dollars in stimulus funding that we received for the 2009-10 year was used for day-to-day operating costs, scholarships, and to fund the employee Voluntary Buy-out Program. Last year 122 MTSU employees took advantage of the Voluntary Buy-out Program, from which we estimate a cost savings of approximately \$5 million. The remaining stimulus funds were used for purchases of major academic equipment, special projects and some badly needed renovations.

Some examples of other selected academic projects funded with stimulus funds include:

- ✓ Renovation of Tucker Theatre
- ✓ Equipment for the Molecular Biosciences laboratory
- ✓ A flight simulator for the Department of Aerospace
- ✓ A new convergent Media Lab for the College of Mass Communication
- ✓ New equipment for the Library
- ✓ Labs for Archaeological and Forensic Anthropology program
- ✓ A Triple Quad Mass Spectrometer for the Department of Chemistry
- ✓ A Focused Ion Beam System for the Physics Department
- ✓ A new TV Production Laboratory Truck for the Electronic Media Communication Department



Tuition Increase

The Tennessee Board of Regents approved a 5.2% tuition increase for MTSU at its June 2010 meeting. Any new revenue generated from this increase will first be used to cover fixed cost increases such as utilities, scholarship increases, faculty promotion and increased fringe benefits costs. A portion of that revenue may also be used for new initiatives that have been designed to position the University for the future.

Any balances that become available from the modest increase that is anticipated as a result of the tuition increase and enrollment growth will be used to mitigate other reductions. The University will continue to work on budget reductions consistent with the *Positioning the University for the Future* plan and provide regular updates via multiple channels, including campus e-mail and the *Positioning the University for the Future website*.

Capital Projects/Facilities Update

MTSU continues to move forward with the planning and development of several capital projects across campus.

- Construction began on the College of Education building in the fall of 2009 and is scheduled for substantial completion and move-in by summer 2011;

- The construction on the new Student Union is ahead of schedule as it also began in fall 2009. It is scheduled for completion and move-in in approximately 18 months
- Major renovations of Cummings and Corlew Halls have been completed and food services renovations have been completed in the KUC dining hall and in Corlew's McCallie Dining.
- And...this past year while there was no state appropriation for new capital construction, we continue to bring to attention the critical need for our new science building to be funded when resources are available.

Blue Raider Athletics

Our Athletics staff and student athletes have many recent accomplishments both on and off the field of play. Our student athletes continue to excel athletically and academically.

In terms of academics, during the spring 2010 semester:

- 51% of all student-athletes had a grade point average of 3.0 or higher;
- 24% of all student-athletes made the Dean's List by earning a grade point average of 3.5 or higher;
- 17 student-athletes had a perfect 4.0 GPA; and
- 8 of 17 teams had a semester team GPA of 3.0 or higher.
- The cumulative GPA for all student-athletes was 3.01 for this past academic year.
- The most recent Academic Progress Rate (APR) report, which was released at the beginning of the summer, shows that MTSU had a department-wide score of 968 (out of 1,000) in 2008-09. All 17 MTSU sports teams achieved passing marks of 925 or higher in 2008-09, with nine teams turning in a perfect mark of 1,000.
- The Blue Raiders won 6 conference championships including the New Orleans Bow and our football team ended the season with a 10-3 record to become the first Sun Belt team to ever win 10 games in a single season.



External Funding and Private Fundraising

While we have done our best to manage severe budget reductions with some help from the federal stimulus funds, there is no question about the adverse impact of these cuts on the progress of our University. As we experience a persistent decline in state appropriation, we must place an even greater importance on securing other sources of

funding for the University. In terms of private and external funding, we continue to place significant emphasis on outside fundraising to support our mission.

For example:

- ✓ Last year, we had 8,841 donors who contributed \$6.5 million in total gift dollars. This is a \$2.3 million increase over the previous year. During the past 5 years, our donor numbers increased more than 20%. This is significant since alumni participation in giving has been decreasing according to national reports.
- ✓ We've seen similar fund raising success in our athletics program as 2010 was a record year for our Blue Raider Athletic Association. Unrestricted contributions topped the \$1 million mark for the first time in history – an increase of more than \$250,000 over the previous year and the BRAA reached an all time high in membership of 1,966.
- ✓ We secured more than \$3 million in federal appropriations for the fiscal year
- ✓ MTSU receives more than \$37 million dollars for research, creative activity and public service programs.

Challenges for the Coming Year



Most of you are aware by now that in January of this year, the Tennessee General Assembly passed the “Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010.” This legislation calls for major reform for our colleges and universities with focus on student retention, degree completion, improvement in the areas of transfer and articulation, and institutional mission distinctiveness. The impact of this legislation will be significant for our university in light of the new state Master Plan that THEC has recently endorsed. New

changes to the funding formula and the emphasis on outcome measures means that we must re-double our efforts in these areas with particular emphasis on producing more graduates. The proposed funding formula places emphasis on retention and graduation rates; and on research and doctoral programs. We are already exploring ways to address these new standards and mandates. As we move ahead, we will need your best ideas and efforts to adjust to the mandates of this new higher education legislation.

I hope that you will continue to find this e-newsletter informative and useful. I welcome your feedback and comments, which can be sent to smcphoe@mtsu.edu. As always, please know that I appreciate your support of Middle Tennessee State University.