

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY SIDELINES

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Farm Lab up for possible elimination

By ALEX MOORMAN
Campus News Editor

Based on a recommendation by the Steering Committee, agriculture students could lose hands-on experience due to the suggested elimination of MTSU's Farm Lab.

The committee made the suggestion in the final report that was submitted last Friday to President Sidney McPhee and released to the rest of the MTSU community on Monday.

"It would be disastrous for the students because this is something that they really need," said Tim Redd, Farm Lab director.

Jason Tanner, Stark Dairy Farm manager, said he feels that without the Farm Lab, the department will suffer.

"I'm not excited about the possibility of the Farm Lab being completely eliminated," Tanner said. "If we lose our farm labs, it's going to smother out the department."

The final report includes recommendations from the Steering Committee. No final decisions have been made, but the current report has people working at the Farm Labs scared for its future and the future of the students involved in the programs.

"It's like teaching someone to fly a plane without a plane," Tanner said. "Agriculture is one of the most important aspects of our society, and students who are interested in that field need the experience that the labs give them."

The final report states that they support the elimination of the Farm Lab and that associated courses and



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
Will Davis, a senior agriculture business student, herds cattle into the milking facility at MTSU's Dairy Farm Lab. All Farm Labs have been recommended to be eliminated because of budget cuts.

majors can be maintained. They also recommend researching more cost effective methods of instruction.

The Steering Committee's proposal states possibly finding off-campus farms for students to get experience in, but Redd said that was not a likely option.

Charles Perry, Steering Committee chair, said that the committee was considering alternate ways of providing the same quality experience that the students were getting now that might be more cost effective than the Farm Labs.

"As far as working with local farmers and getting our student's experience there, I don't think that's possible," Redd said. "The first problem would be that it is a liability for MTSU."

Redd said it's going to be difficult to find farmers with the equipment needed to teach these students, and it's going to be nearly impossible to find farmers that would be willing to let inexperienced students on their farms to learn with farmers' livelihood.



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
Jason Tanner, Dairy Farm manager, milks cattle yesterday. If the lab is eliminated, he risks losing his job.

FARM, PAGE 2

Faculty members face cuts

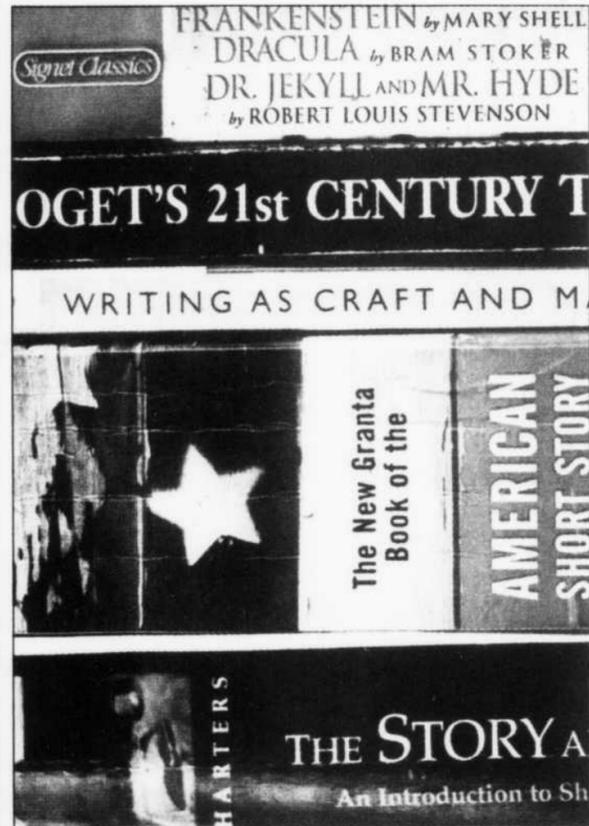


Photo illustration by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
The English department could experience a loss of up to 19 faculty members because of the recent budget cuts. English books, like the ones seen above, are used by professors that may lose their jobs.

By JESSICA HASTON
Copy Editor

The Steering Committee proposed cutting between 32 and 40 faculty members from overstuffed departments in its final report.

Based on the Academic and Instruction Review group's suggestions, the Steering Committee proposed the reduction of temporary faculty for potential savings of \$2.2 to \$2.9 million in the '09-'10 fiscal year.

Other possible methods for reducing temporary faculty include cutting one position from each department, combining the aforementioned approach with temporary faculty reductions from overstuffed departments, reducing adjunct professors from overstuffed departments, correcting chair reassignment understaffing and reducing faculty from understuffed departments.

The proposed reduction

from overstuffed departments would affect the English department the most, with a possible 13 to 19, faculty members being cut.

The English department employs 36 full-time temporary faculty members, 50 adjuncts, 43 tenured professors on the tenure track.

Overstaffing is determined by the School Credit Hour formula imposed by the Tennessee Board of Regents, said English department chair Tom Strawman.

"In the 20 years that I've been at this school, that formula has never been revisited or adjusted for the needs of contemporary educational delivery," Strawman said. "It was predicted primarily upon a community college model where everybody is teaching five courses, and you pack your classrooms full, and the outcome is pretty mediocre."

FACULTY, PAGE 3

Women's center risks elimination

By FAITH FRANKLIN
Community News Editor

Students face the possibility of losing the June Anderson Women's Center, which generates gender circles, free legal clinics and sexual assault/domestic violence awareness, due to pending budget cuts.

The Steering Committee suggested the possible elimination of the JAWC in their final report to President Sidney McPhee last Friday.

"[JAWC] is a one-stop shop that connects students to resources," said Terri Johnson, director for JAWC. "Students get one-on-one attention, and it's [our] philosophy that everyone is im-

portant." Johnson said that she would clear her whole calendar if she had to.

"That one student is important," Johnson said. "I want that student to be successful."

MTSU has had a women's center for more than 30 years.

"The women's center represents a safe place that students can come to and feel free, open and honest," Johnson said.

Angela Manning, a senior child development major, said that JAWC is like a second home for her and everyone that works there.

WOMEN, PAGE 3

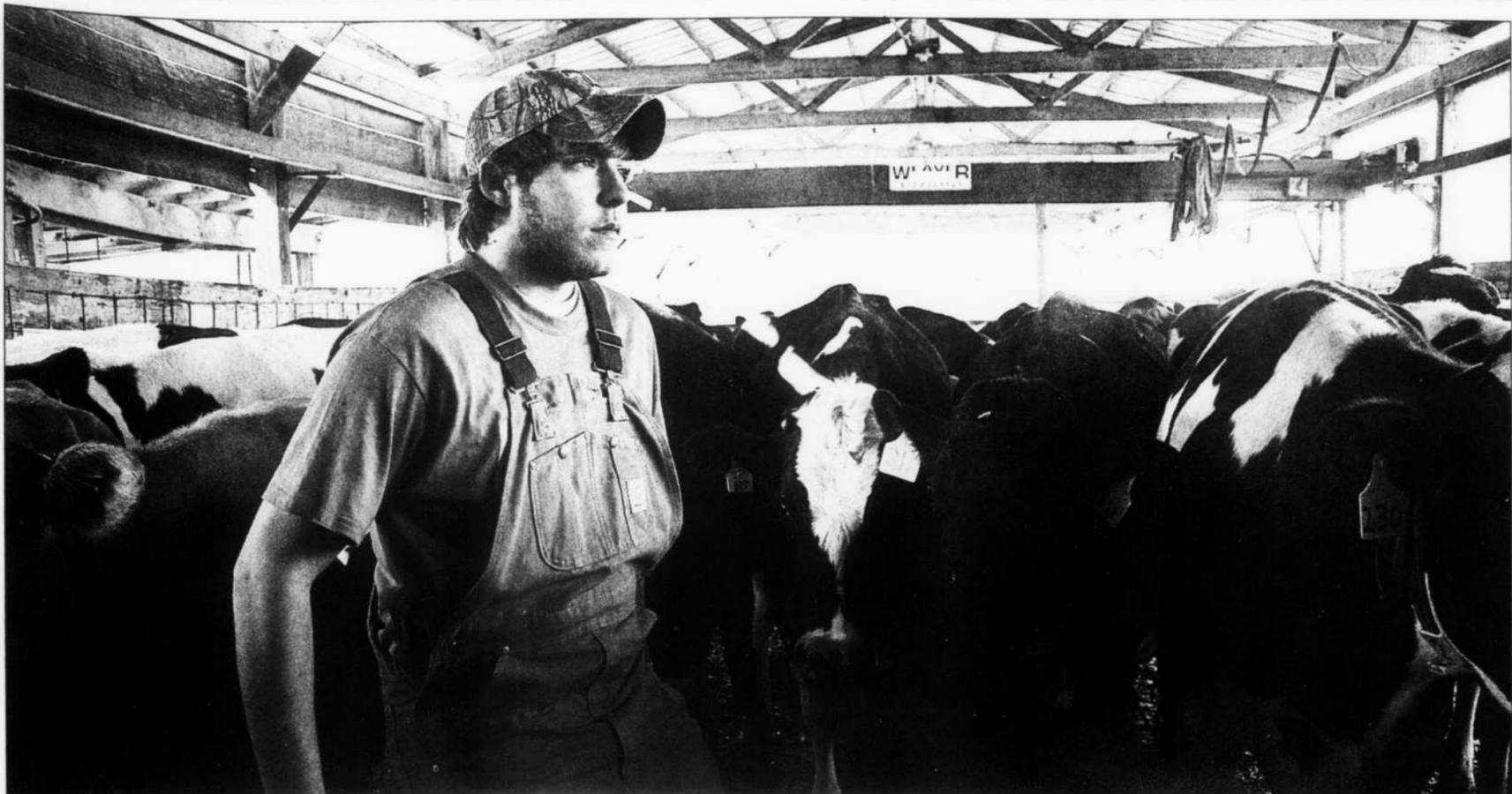


Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
Kevin Colvert, a junior agriculture business major, waits to send cattle into the milking facility to be milked. The cows are milked everyday at 3:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

FARM
FROM PAGE 1

Perry said that the Steering Committee looked into it, and that MTSU is the only university in the state with farm labs, but almost all other university's have found that there is a more cost effective way to get the same results without having a farm lab.

"I was surprised with the amount of money that the committee said they would be able to cut by eliminating us because those were different numbers than we had but we had, heard

that there was a possibility that we would be on the list of possible eliminations," Redd said.

Redd said that without this experience for students finding a job would be difficult.

"Eliminating this department denies students the experience that most future employers will be looking for," Redd said.

Tanner said that he had talked to a lot of students and they are really upset. He said they feel like that without the labs, it will almost eliminate the entire program.



Photo by Alex Blackwelder, photography editor
MTSU Farm Labs raise calves, like the ones seen above, from birth to full-grown milk producers. Ten to 15 percent of the milk is used on MTSU's campus.

WOMEN
FROM PAGE 1

Manning has been volunteering at JAWC for the past five years and was recently hired to help coordinate MTSU's National Women's History Month celebrations.

"I am upset that we are even on the list [of possible eliminations]," Manning said.

Manning said that a lot of people do not realize the importance of JAWC.

"The women's center provides MTSU women a safe place on campus [to go to] if they are dealing with any issue," said Allison Lay, a senior communications studies major.

Students come into the women's center with simple questions that are outside of their advising session and the women's center staff goes out of their way to get to the bottom of students problems, Lay said.

"The women center is an asset to MTSU and the community as well," Lay said.

JAWC offers legal clinics

once a month with a lawyer from the community free of charge.

Johnson said that JAWC is a place that can connect students to a bigger part of the campus, and that this connection can affect the school's retention rate.

Natashia Sartain, a junior sociology major and women studies minor, said that MTSU having a women's center influenced her decision to attend.

"The JAWC specifically caters to the needs that other universities without a women's center would just overlook," Sartain said. "The women's center sponsors a lot of things that are important to this campus."

For example bell hooks is coming to campus in a few weeks, Sartain said.

Hooks, a critically acclaimed author, is scheduled to visit campus on Tuesday, March 24 to deliver a keynote speech in the Keathley University Center Theater at 4 p.m.

"I really don't think that would be happening if we did not have a women's center," Sartain said.

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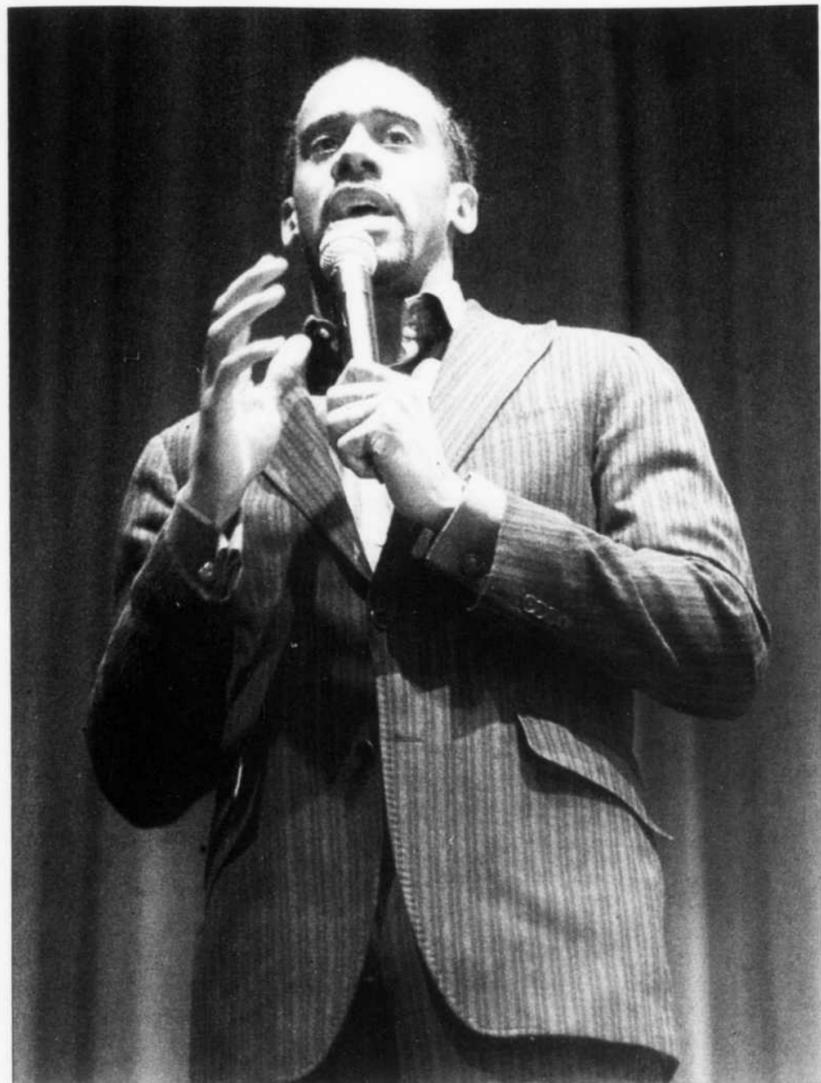


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Jeff Johnson, host and producer of Black Entertainment Television, speaks to a crowd of MTSU students about current issues in honor of Black History Month.



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Students and community members watch as Jeff Johnson gives a lecture entitled "The Quest for Black Citizenship" in Tucker Theatre.

BET hosts Speaker

STAFF REPORT

Jeff Johnson, host and producer of Black Entertainment Television's "The Truth with Jeff Johnson," spoke about current issues to an audience of MTSU students and community Tuesday night.

The speech was sponsored by MTSU Black History Month Committee, the Distinguished Lecture fund, the Afri-

can American Student Association, the National Pan-Hellenic Council and Women in Action.

Johnson's speech, "The Quest for Black Citizenship," touched on a number of issues including race, politics, education, community and current economic crisis.

"We are dealing with a time in our history that is grave," Johnson said. "Average American

citizens have to come up with solutions to make it better."

His speech also included a discussion about the recent election of Barack Obama, followed by an open forum on the numerous issues plaguing the community in regards to racism.

"We are beginning to have a sense or sensibility about race that is becoming misplaced," Johnson said.

The Seigenthaler Chair of Excellence in First Amendment Studies and The College of Mass Communication present



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FACULTY FROM PAGE 1

Stawman said that, according to this formula, faculty members would have to teach 125 students each per semester.

"We are trying to follow 'best practices' in our discipline—that's the Modern Language Association and the Association of Departments of English," Strawman said. "They cite as best practice no more than 60 writing-intensive students per faculty member in a given semester."

Lori McClure-Wade, a full-time temporary who has worked at MTSU for 10 years, said that if the number of students rises over 100, it becomes almost impossible for instructors to work with the students and help them with drafting, editing and improving their work.

"I think that the department will suffer a loss of morale and that our depart-

ment chairs will be forced to overburden us, even as they know that doing so will lead to negative results for all parties involved," said McClure-Wade.

Stawman said that he has never seen so much anxiety among the English faculty about the future.

"This protracted process has been really demoralizing for everybody," Strawman said. "People are worried about their jobs and what they're going to do about tomorrow."

Tony Ramey, a full-time temporary English instructor who has taught at MTSU for two years, said he and his wife are concerned for their children.

"I'm a bit frightened, since it appears my livelihood is being sacrificed for 'creative restructuring' of a 'business model,'" Ramey said.

Ramey said that reductions would overtax the faculty, students would suffer more.

"We try to engage students and let them know that what they think matters to us and to the world," Ramey said. "With these kinds of changes, the department simply won't be able to take the time necessary to give them the quality education for which they are paying dearly."

Stawman said that many faculty members would rather pursue other methods of saving money.

"Most of the faculty, the Faculty Senate is on record of preferring that we take furloughs and use whatever extra money we have to save jobs, as opposed to trying to speculate about what programs are going to be moneymakers in the future," Strawman said.

Steering Committee Chair Charles Perry would not comment on the proposed faculty reduction.

"I can't say anything beyond what's already in the report," Perry said.

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Up 'Til Dawn raises \$81,000 for St. Jude patients

Be a part of next year's event!

Up 'Til Dawn is a national student-led, student-run fundraising organization. Over 200 campuses participate in an Up 'Til Dawn event, but MTSU is among the best. For 10 years, MTSU students have been leading the way in hosting this campus and community-wide event, raising over \$640,000 to fight childhood cancer.



Positions are open for next year's Up 'Til Dawn. When you become part of this organization, you will receive great experiences that are sure to add value to your resume and make you feel good about helping children at St. Jude Research Hospital.

There are many ways to get involved as a volunteer, team member, executive board or planning committee. Within these positions, are opportunities in entertainment, catering, corporate sponsorship, public relations, recruitment, finance patient relations, logistics, fundraising and spirit.

Applications can be picked up in the KUS room 326-S and are due Friday, Mar. 20th. For more information about what you can do to help St. Jude Children, visit <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~uptildawn/> or call (615) 898-5812.



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OPINIONS

Sidelines is the editorially independent, non-profit student-produced newspaper of Middle Tennessee State University. Sidelines publishes Monday and Thursday during the fall and spring semesters and Wednesday during June and July. The opinions expressed herein are those of individual writers and not necessarily Sidelines or MTSU.

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

Signed, sealed, hung out to dry

The gross reality of which programs, majors and staff the budget cuts will likely affect has hit home for many in the form of the Steering Committee's final report.

In the report, the committee outlines, in great number, specific recommendations and tentative plans that President Sidney McPhee will take into account in determining how best to keep MTSU afloat.

We at *Sidelines* realize the severity of the state's economy and understand that drastic cuts were inevitable to ensure the future of our school. It basically comes down to the issue of money and Tennessee not having enough of it.

Regardless, many aspects on campus will be dearly missed, from familiar faculty and staff to entire departments and specializations.

So we've compiled a list of the things that we think are the most illogical or unusual items being herded for the slaughter.

But as McPhee said: "There are no golden cows."

The English department is slated to be cut under the final report, yet basically every student has to take English courses at one time or another. In addition, 13-19 faculty positions will be cut, which could make up either about a third or half of total faculty eliminations.

The June Anderson Women's Center removal also seems rather arbitrary. This charitable center not only provides domestic violence counseling, but free legal counsel as well. It even holds "Take Back the Night," which raises awareness about rape.

The Farm Lab provides crucial space and equipment for biology, agriculture, agribusiness, pre-veterinary and veterinary majors, but the Steering Committee is planning on erasing it, too, from the future of MTSU. This is despite the fact that MTSU sends more students to veterinary schools than any other university in Tennessee.

The long, long list of departmental cuts can seem dismal as well. Among the committee's index of most-to-least important departments lies the following at the bottom: criminal justice administration, philosophy, sociology & anthropology, computer science, art, physics, and several others. Each is important for different reasons, but all could face drastic changes to the way they operate on this campus.

Human, behavioral sciences crucial study

By EMILY DUCK
Guest Columnist

Imagine that you are a junior looking forward to the promise of your senior year. Your major courses are finally coming together. You've developed relationships with all of your professors, and of course you have big plans for your last year with all of your friends.

Now imagine that you have just heard that your major is on the chopping block because of budget cuts. Forget those senior classes to which you have been looking forward. Forget having the professor that you have worked so hard to earn respect from and forget all of those plans you've made with your friends.

Now you're looking into transfer admissions requirements for universities that haven't yet cut your program.

Hopefully you haven't signed your lease for next year, because you are about to uproot and change schools for your senior year. It's a pretty terrifying thought, and it is reality for many MTSU students, my-

self included.

With the proposed departmental cuts that have been presented thus far, not only is my major, family and consumer sciences education, at risk of being cut, but the entire department of human sciences is at risk of consolidation.

This department includes a wide variety of majors including child development and family studies, early childhood education, family and consumer sciences education, interior design, nutrition and food science, and textiles, design and

“ Why would we ever want to stray from what was founded upon so many years ago? ”

merchandising.

I find it shocking that the university would even consider cutting an entire department with such a vast array of degree programs. I don't think the committee that came up with these decisions really understands the impact of this decision, as not one member of this committee is in any way related to the Human Sciences Department.

It's easy to decide to cut a department when there is no one there to defend it,

and unfortunately that is exactly what we are experiencing with this decision.

MTSU was founded in 1911 as a school for training teachers and in 1925 became known as Middle Tennessee State Teachers College. By elimination of the human sciences department, you in turn are removing two education programs: family and consumer sciences education and early childhood education.

Why would we ever want to stray from what was founded upon so many years ago? Education is something that this university has always held so high. We strive not

only to train teachers, but to have the best educators available for students. By eliminating education degrees, I feel like MTSU is discouraging anyone considering a degree in education and devaluing their education department and their roots.

The family and consumer sciences major is one area that has been directly targeted for elimination, and I think this is due to lack of education about what exactly this degree entails.

Too many people still stereotype our program as home economics where all you learn is to cook and sew.

Some even go as far as to refer to it as an "MRS." Degree, insinuating not only that this is a strictly female major, but also that the people who are majoring in this field are doing so just to learn "wife skills."

That is not at all what our program is about. It is about life skills.

In 1994, our program changed names from home economics to family and consumer sciences. With this name change came also a new focus for our area: family and consumer sciences was not to be just about homemaking skills, but more so about the family in relation to the contemporary society.

Students of any gender or race or ethnicity learn skills that they will truly be able to take with them throughout their lives and use daily.

One of the newest additions being made is a personal finance course that all high school students will be required to take in order to graduate, and FACS teachers are the ones who are going to be qualified to teach this course.

During this economic hardship, personal finance is something essential for our high school students to learn about so hopefully our nation will not be in this position again, but by eliminating the FACS program at MTSU, which is the largest in the state of Tennessee, you're cutting a high number of pre-service FACS teachers from this opportunity.

This is an area where people are truly needed and jobs are being offered left and right, but yet MTSU believes we should cut this degree, in a time of recession when more people are being laid off than hired on.

In the recent history of MTSU's family and consumer sciences department, there has been a 300 percent increase in enrollment due to a new online-centered format that include: eight online, two hybrid and three web assisted courses which draw in non-traditional and distance-learning students.

Emily Duck is an education and behavioral sciences junior and can be reached at edd2e@mtsu.edu.

To read more, visit us online.



www.mtsusidelines.com

Make your voice heard, SGA needs focus

Some time after spring break, I, along with Student Government Association President Sondra Wilson and an additional SGA senator or two, will be meeting with state Sen. Jim Kyle to discuss the Tennessee HOPE scholarship and possible changes in the amount of money that would be awarded to students.

The increase will offset the rise in tuition that is expected next year due to the financial climate. As a senator, I will be providing my own opinions about the legislation that Sen. Kyle will propose, but my job is to also represent you in making sure your voice is heard in important matters such as these.

Although the discussion will mainly be concerning the increase in money given to students under the HOPE, I want to make sure that your voice is heard on other matters regarding the scholarship as well.

If you are interested in



Important Discussions of Important Matters

Sam Ashby

doing this, please send me your opinion or statement in an e-mail. I'd prefer that your response is grammatically correct and readable, and please don't write like you would on your Facebook status.

Also, please be respectful and don't use curse words. If you do, I will not give your response in the final draft to the senator. I will include all responses, whether or not you agree or disagree with my point of view doesn't matter to me.

Also, your response can concern more than just the monetary aspects of the HOPE scholarship; if you have problems with other parts of it, by all means, address them as well.

When I receive your e-mail, I will let you know I have read your response and that it will be included in the final report given to the senator.

My e-mail address is at the end of this article if you're interested.

With that out of the way, I'd like to discuss some things that have come up since the end of the elections.

First, I want to say that I'm pleased with the result of the "All-Access Plan" vote. Although I believe that MTSU is in need of a parking garage and traffic improvements, now is not the time. Many of the students at MTSU have that

same opinion as well.

I'm disappointed, though, that up to \$10,000 was spent to advertise this issue. In the end, it was voted against and basically \$10,000 was wasted.

That was money that could have gone toward dorm improvements, fixing broken lights on campus, etc.

The SGA election is now

“ Student participation is going to be the main issue the SGA will need to focus on in the upcoming year. ”

over (thank goodness) and I must say I'm pleased with the way things came out. About 3,000 students voted in the election; this has been about the same that have participated in previous elections.

Student participation is going to be the main issue the SGA will need to focus on in the upcoming year if we're serious about

improving student life on campus and increasing involvement.

Some would like to argue that the majority of the students on campus are lazy, and just don't want to join campus organizations.

I beg to differ.

I believe that we, as organizations, aren't reaching out to the student body in

a manner that's truly in tune with the way that students go about their lives. I believe if this were

to change, the university would begin to see an increase in student involvement on campus.

Samuel Ashby is a freshman in liberal arts and can be reached at sa2s@mtsu.edu.

To read more, visit us online.



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COMICS



"And Friends"

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SHOULD STUDENT UNION FUNDS BE USED TO HELP WITH BUDGET CUTS?

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Lórien shows creativity in new album

Nashville-based band expresses maturity, musicality through "Esque"



By JESSICA PACE
Staff Writer

The Nashville-based band Lórien has come a long way since its 2006 EP "The Ghost in the Parlor." The band has grown up, maturing from a group of Belmont roommates who play music for fun to a group of musicians who approach their craft with professionalism.

The changes in the band over the last two years are recognizable in its new album "Esque," which was released at 12th and Porter on Feb. 28. With music no longer a hobby for the band, guitarist and lead vocalist Kaleb Jones expresses more than anything else.

"I think we have matured a lot as people and musicians throughout the years and in between records," Jones says. "We've grown up a lot literally and figuratively. The biggest leap for us is how we approach the music and the band as a whole. Still, Lórien's philosophy isn't all work and no play."

Jones says the band tries to approach everything in a professional manner.

"Don't get me wrong, we are not trying to suck the fun out of it," Jones says. "We just approach it now as the most job in the entire world. We love what we do."

The 12th and Porter show

marks the most ceremonious debut full-length album release for Lórien thus far, and there was enough support at the venue Saturday night to prove it.

The band views "Esque" as one of its greatest efforts and accomplishments and describes its release as a celebration more than anything else.

"We have worked so hard on every aspect of this album, and we can't help but be excited," Jones says.

The entire composition of "Esque" was strategic. The cover art, album title and meanings behind the songs are all interconnected. The front of "Esque" features a vibrant collage of color swatches, inspired by five separate designs created by lead guitarist Chase Gregory. Each band member chose a color and particular word that encompassed the album, and the design is intended to reflect the members' individual perceptions of the music.

Lórien uses the correlation between the abstract cover and album title to help achieve its message.

"We believe that music as an art form is such a powerful vehicle of communication," Jones says. "It promotes community and conversation. It evokes such powerful emotions and can reflect on and tell so many amazing stories."

Jones says "Esque" is a re-



Photo courtesy of Myspace.com

(From left to right) Thomas Doeve (drums, loops), Kaleb Jones (vocals, guitar), Chase Gregory (guitar), Cara Pollock (keys) and David Deaton (bass) make up the band Lórien. The group released its new album, "Esque," on Feb. 28.

lection of life.

"Each note and each word is plucked from real life — from relationships, from hopes, from fears, from joys."

The band chose "Esque" as the album title because of the meaning the five found in the word.

"'Esque' is a word we've chosen to describe community and continual conversation we have with music and each other," Jones says. "These songs, and all songs for that matter, remind us of parts of our own lives. We hope that others can find a piece of themselves in these songs."

The 12 tracks, selected from roughly 30 songs, are deliberate, ethereal and

possess a clarity in sound and production often uncommon for a debut album. This can partially be attributed to improved production and sonic quality from "The Ghost in the Parlor," though Jones says it is the "quirks" in the record's sound that the band finds most appealing.

"As far as the music goes, we really tried to hone in on a reactive sound on this record," Jones says. "Popular music gets recycled over and over and over again, and we didn't want to jump on any bandwagon. We don't want to be the next or new 'insert the popular band here.'"

There is distinction between each track, yet the

songs still share a common haunting quality. The melodies, not lyrics, are slightly reminiscent of Coldplay and the keyboards in songs like "Do the Regret" and "Singing Isn't Music" add a *Nightmare Before Christmas*-esque element to it. If "The Ghost in the Parlor" was Lórien finding its voice, "Esque" declares it found.

"Overall, this is a record that we believe is purely our own stylistically, lyrically and musically," Jones says. "This is our sound, our identity."

Jones uses the word "honest" to encapsulate "Esque" and believes the album to be reflective of "life and all its intricacies."

"We don't suck as much

as we used to," Jones says plainly.

As a result, touring is in the future for Lórien, which is a favorite for Jones in particular. During March 18-21, the band will perform at the RedGorilla Music Fest in Austin, Texas. But as far as the actual success and reception of "Esque," Jones expresses no particular expectations.

"Every time we try to anticipate something, it happens completely different," Jones says. "We are going to enjoy the ride either way and continually remind ourselves of how lucky we are to be pursuing our passion with our best friends in the world."

Restaurant review: *Limestone Mexican Grill and Seafood*

More than Mexican cuisine

Newly opened welcoming restaurant near MTSU affordable, tasty

By MALARIE WOODS
Assistant Features Editor

A new restaurant has snuck up on the landscape of Rutherford Boulevard, but Limestone Mexican Grill and Seafood is not your average Mexican fare.

This is Mexican from the moment you walk inside because of the stone fountain in the foyer. The water's calming trickle mixed with the warming trickled decorations make for an elegant experience with not a sombrero in sight.

Stylish imitation-wicker seating and checkered tablecloths lend to the Spanish flair. Everything else could be straight from the pages of *Home and Garden Magazine*, including the heavy, wooden gate-like restroom doors.

Of course, my first experience with the food comes from the chips and salsa, the latter of which has a nice bite to it. It is surprisingly spicy, which most Mexican places steer clear of in their complimentary appetizer.

Fortunately, my waitress is on top of her duties, and drinks come quickly.

Since I am out on a Sat-



Photo by Erin O'Leary, staff photographer

Located on Rutherford Boulevard, Limestone Grill offers traditional Mexican fair in an atmosphere that is not overstated. Student discounts will soon be available.

urday, there are no drink specials, but a large mug of Dos Equis is priced moderately enough that I am able to enjoy a refreshing beer with my meal.

The prices are in fact rather fair, with lunch specials ranging from \$5 - \$10 dollars and grilled entrees topping out at around \$20 dollars, not unusual for

Mexican cuisine.

What is unusual about this place is how wonderful the meal is. I try a lunch special comprised of a chicken quesadilla, beef enchilada, rice and beans. The rice is a little watery, the beans are bland, but everything else tastes fresh and well seasoned.

The one disappointing

aspect of the meal is the plain grilled chicken is a dollar more than shredded chicken mixed with peppers and the onions. In my opinion, it should be the other way around, or at least the same price.

One of my fellow diners orders a steak chimichangas and the other a taco salad. Portions of each

meal are smaller than what I'm accustomed to in Mexican restaurants, but we all finished our meals with a nice full feeling instead of a disgusting stuffed one that's standard at places like Camano Real.

The service is also excellent at Limestone Grill. The chips and salsa are always overflowing, and our

empty plates sit in front of us for hardly more than a minute.

We are all unfortunately too full to partake in flan or sopapilla for dessert, but with our hearty and delicious meals behind us, we know either dish would have been a wonderfully sweet compliment to our lunch.

The most refreshing part of eating at Limestone Grill is the atmosphere. The restaurant is immaculately clean and well maintained, and every seating area feels intimate and private.

There are even a few tables behind what looks to be an iron gate, which could almost be like a romantic and secluded getaway for a newlywed couple.

Soon, the owners plan to offer discounts to MTSU students.

When you walk into the doors of Limestone Grill, you no longer feel like you're in a strip mall. Instead, the experience is classy and tasteful, and the menu is excellent.

This Mexican restaurant has a twist that I doubt anyone will be disappointed with.

SPORTS

Baseball team maintains offensive power

Blue Raiders sweep two-game home series against Memphis with 18-4, 18-3 victories

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

With snow covering the campus, the Blue Raider baseball team warmed up its bats with an explosive series sweep over Memphis on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Despite having two games cancelled this past weekend due to the weather, MT hasn't lost a step offensively. With lopsided victories of 18-4 and 18-3, the Blue Raiders have shown they have some power in their bats.

"We swung the bats great and played great defense," MT head coach Steve Peterson said. "We got so many hits in the holes, and the home runs were huge."

In the two game series, five different Blue Raiders hammered a ball over the outfield wall for a home run. MT also totaled 43 hits during the series that helped move the Blue Raiders to 7-1 on the season. Junior catcher Drew Robertson led the Blue Raider charge, going 7-for-8 over the series with five RBIs and his first career home run.

"We have some real experienced and competitive batters on this team," Peterson said.

terson said.

MT pitching and defense also walked away from the series with impressive marks as the Tigers only scored seven runs on 15 hits over the two-game stretch.

In the first game, junior Kenneth Roberts took the mound and earned the win with three scoreless innings of one-hit baseball. Roberts walked one and struck out another in the 18-4 victory.

"Kenny Roberts played well, and the relief did what it needed to do to get him the win," Peterson said.

Peterson's relief included a strong session from sophomore Nick Montgomery, who pitched three innings and gave up one earned run while striking out three. Freshman Justin Guidry came in to close the game with two innings of scoreless work, two hits and two strikeouts.

At the plate, the Blue Raiders were just as successful during Tuesday's game. Sophomore shortstop Justin Miller and Robertson both went 4-for-4 in the game with four RBIs and two runs scored. Senior designated hitter Grant Box belted a three-run homer in the third inning.

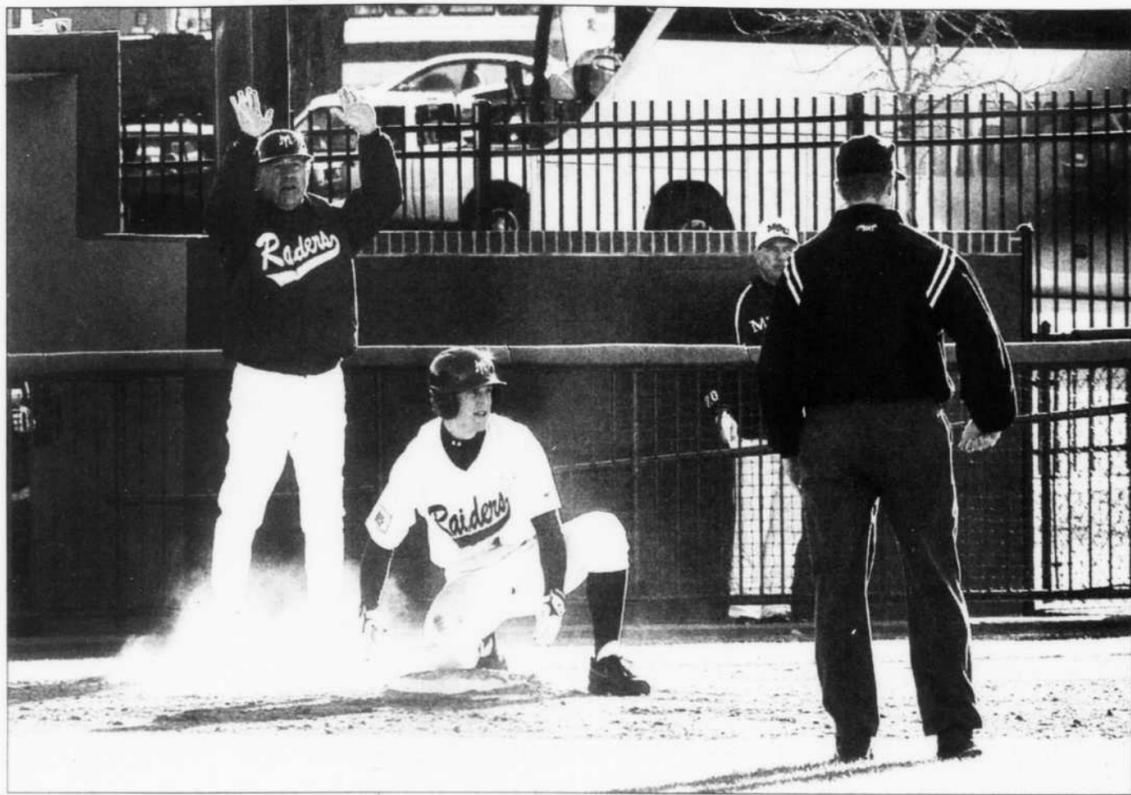


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

MT shortstop Justin Miller checks to see if he is safe at third. The Blue Raiders are 7-1 this season with the sweep of Memphis.

"That home run that Grant got was huge at that point in the game," Peterson said.

Box's home run keyed a seven-run inning for MT in the third that put the game completely out of reach.

The Blue Raiders experienced more of the same on Wednesday as the team

finished the sweep with an 18-3 win over the Tigers.

MT's offense exploded early, scoring six runs in the second inning on six hits. For the game, the team was led from the plate by Robertson and junior right-fielder Stuart Meinhart both went 3-for-4 with two doubles and scored three

runs.

Junior Chad Edwards gave MT a quality outing from the mound as he picked up the win. Edwards pitched six innings giving up seven hits, two earned runs and three strikeouts.

"Chad pitched very well today," Peterson said. "I thought he had one of the

best starts he has had.

"It is huge that you have a good outing from your starter because you don't want to use too much of your bullpen."

The Blue Raiders will travel to New Orleans for a three-game series against the Privateers starting on Friday at 6:30 p.m.

Men's basketball wins 69-62 in Sun Belt first round

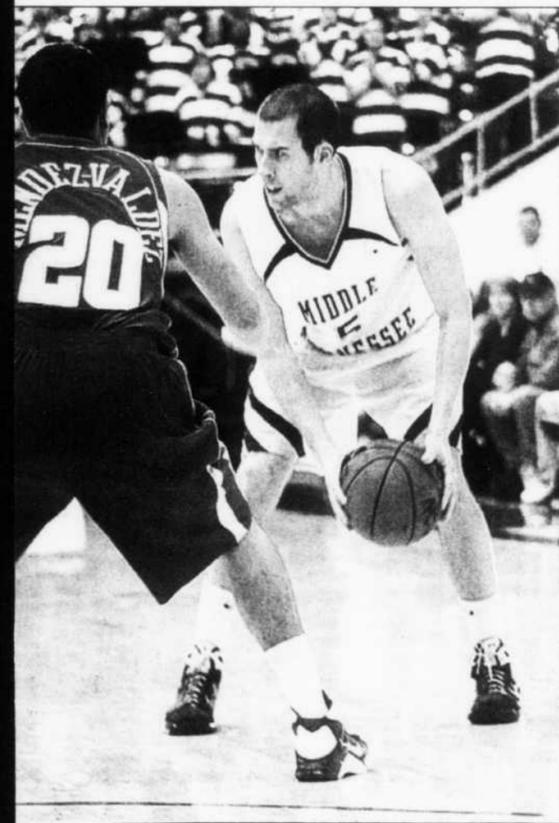


Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer

Kevin Kanaskie looks to set up a play against WKU. MT will advance to the second round of the Sun Belt tournament.

By ZACH REVES
Assistant Sports Editor

March postseason madness has started and the Blue Raider men's basketball team has met the challenge with a 69-62 win over Arkansas State in the Murphy Center last night.

In the first round of the Sun Belt Tournament, the Blue Raiders spread the ball around to achieve a victory. Four players scored in double-figures as MT will be heading to Hot Springs, Ark., for the second round of the tournament.

Senior guard Kevin Kanaskie ensured that he will play another game in a blue uniform as he led the team with 13 points on 4-of-10 shooting and six rebounds.

Junior forward Montarrio Haddock came through off the bench as he totaled 12 points to go along with his five rebounds in 27 minutes of play. Senior guard Nigel Johnson was

4-of-12 from the floor for 11 points, six rebounds and three assists.

The Blue Raiders were outshot from the floor by the Red Wolves all game, but the boys in blue were still able to pull out the victory. MT only shot 44 percent from the floor compared to ASU's 48 percent and MT was outshot from the free throw line 67 percent to 88 percent.

MT overcame the disparity in the shooting percentages by being extra tough off the glass as they grabbed an amazing 17 offensive rebounds for the game compared to ASU's nine. The Blue Raiders also took good care of the ball as they only turned it over eight times in the game.

A strong first half kept the Blue Raiders in control of the game as they outscored the Red Wolves 28-23 at the half. In the second half, MT traded shot for

shot with ASU to maintain control of the game and to hold onto the win.

ASU was led by guard Daniel Bryant who put up 18 points, three rebounds, and four assists before fouling out in the second half of the game. Guard P.J. Keaton also ran into foul trouble as he fouled out of the game, limiting ASU's options in their perimeter attack.

The Blue Raiders who are

seeded fifth in the tournament were able to upend Arkansas State, who came in as the 12th seed in the Sun Belt. MT scored victories against ASU in the Murphy Center twice this season including last night's win.

The Blue Raiders will move on to the second round and will play the North Texas Mean Green in a win or go home match Sunday at 3 p.m.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Top Performers



#11 Nigel Johnson
11 points
6 rebounds
3 assists



#24 Montarrio Haddock
12 points
5 rebounds



#5 Kevin Kanaskie
13 points
6 rebounds

Sports players are recession proof, teams are not

The economy, in all its awfulness, has found its way into pro sports.

With the stock market dropping, you would think that all those overpaid athletes would be changing their monetary dreams as well, right? The irony of paying millions of dollars to have a man hit a ball with a stick or to exist as an excessively tall individual is not lost upon the sports section.

But apparently, as more things change, the more they stay the same in big business sports. The rich stay really rich and the poor stay really poor.

On Tuesday, Manny Ramirez signed a contract



Mr. Irrelevant
Zach Reves

with the Los Angeles Dodgers for a paltry \$45 million over two years. And he is just the latest signing in what has been a highly productive free agency period for both baseball and football.

Mark Teixeira signed an eight-year, \$180 million contract with the

New York Yankees. CC Sabathia got a huge seven-year, \$161 million deal from the Yankees. T.J. Houshmandzadeh just got a five-year, \$40 million contract with the Seattle Seahawks, and he's over 31-years-old in a young man's game at a young man's position. It was a seven-year, \$100 million deal for the newest Washington Redskin Albert Haynesworth.

The fact of the matter is that individual players are not seeing a decrease in contract offers despite our economic recession. Sports are the greatest form of entertainment in America, but these athletes don't do much in the

way of extracurricular activities to justify their price tag. People might be okay with the idea of paying if these guys as if they were curing cancer, but I don't see Tony Romo visiting a doctor's office unless he hurts his pinky again.

As a rich as these athletes are, it seems that some of the organizations might be feeling the effects of the recession. Currently, the NBA has a reserve \$200 million to distribute to "needy" teams during the rest of this season. Twelve teams in the NBA expressed the need for a loan because their financial needs are not being met with their current income.

David Stern, commissioner of the NBA, said that between \$13 and \$20 million could be distributed to each team to keep them afloat in the market.

What does all this mean?

The players are overpaid and the teams are not making profits. Does this sound like a winning combination to anyone else?

If this kind of progress keeps up, pro sports in general may find themselves in dire straights. Sure, perennial money powerhouses like the Redskins and the Yankees won't fall off the map because of the owner's money reserve. But smaller market teams may feel a certain chokehold in the coming years.

If these teams succumb to an economy where they can't compete with the extremely rich, then we might see more teams moving to different cities or folding all together.

Bottom line is that players haven't felt the pressure of these trying times like the rest of us, and eventually it might come back to bite the pro sports world in the rear. Don't be surprised if pro sports, especially small market teams, become hobbled in the coming years for their poor decision making now.

Zach Reves is a senior journalism major and can be reached at sports02@mtsu.edu.

ESPN brings Sun Belt to nation

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

When the Sun Belt Conference was formed in 1976, there were six members competing in four men's sports. Now, the conference hosts 13 universities that compete in 19 different sports for both men and women.

The 24-hour sports network recently signed an agreement with the SBC to extend the conference's coverage through the 2011-2012 season.

"I commend the league for moving forward and continuing to build solid television coverage for our conference," MT women's basketball coach Rick Insell said. "Having a chance

to be on ESPN is always a big plus for any league and we feel this new deal with ESPN will only enhance the Sun Belt's reputation around the nation."

The new agreement will give the Sun Belt's up-and-coming football league a minimum of two games on the network, televised on either ESPN or ESPN2. Regional ESPN stations will also have the right to produce, distribute and syndicate up to five games throughout the season.

Further, ESPN, ESPN2 and ESPN-U (the 24-hour college sports network) will have the opportunity to schedule and air additional games to be televised in a 12-day rolling window.

The Sun Belt has had most of its televised coverage on ESPN. Both Troy and FAU have had huge wins while being seen on an ESPN affiliate.

ESPN and the SBC also have a long history with men's basketball. The network first started televising the Sun Belt

championships in 1980, and this is the 29th consecutive year that ESPN will do so.

The new agreement will continue to air the championships, but will also allot time slots for the individual men's programs. The men's teams can now have up to four appearances

on ESPN and ESPN2. In addition, ESPN regional television can maintain and produce up to eight men's games annually.

Women's basketball, one of the conference's most successful sports, will also benefit greatly from the new deal. Women's teams will make a minimum of two annual appearances on ESPN-U. This is a first for the Sun Belt, as SBC women's basketball has never before been televised.

ESPN can either broadcast the women's cham-

pionships or up to two regular season games, according to the agreement.

"The Sun Belt Conference's negotiation with ESPN, Inc. is one of the most significant events in the conference's 33 year history," Sun Belt Commissioner Wright Waters said on the deal. "There have been many great steps taken in the history of this league including the Sun Belt becoming a member of the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision and the Bowl Championship Series."

"I firmly believe that this new deal and our partnership with ESPN, Inc. is another important step for the success of the Sun Belt Conference."



Photo by Jay Bailey, staff photographer
Junior guard Chelsia Lymon walks off the court and is greeted by head coach Rick Insell during the Western Kentucky game.

MT racks up in SBC annual award lists

Alysha Clark named to All-Sun Belt Conference Women's Team, Chelsia Lymon grabs defensive player award

By CHRIS WELCH
Sports Editor

The Lady Raiders have certainly garnered the attention of the wider sports world, if their latest awards are any proof.

The Sun Belt Conference announced its annual award lists Tuesday, and Middle Tennessee swept all accolades but one.

After receiving her sixth Sun Belt Player of the Week award—the most in conference history—junior forward Alysha Clark was named to the All-Sun Belt Conference Women's Team.

Not only was she named headliner of the All-Conference team, but Clark was also named Player of the Year and Newcomer of the Year.

Clark, who is the nation's leading scorer at an average of 27 points per game, was eligible for Newcomer of the Year as a junior because of a transfer from Belmont. Due to NCAA transfer rules, this was her first year eligible to play at MT.

Raider to receive the award. Amber Holt, who currently plays in the WNBA for the Connecticut Sun, was given the honor in the 2006-2007 season.

In addition to Clark's accolades, junior guard Chelsia Lymon was named the conference's Defensive Player of the Year. Lymon brought the award to MT for the seventh season in a row.

Lymon also was named to the Sun Belt Conference third team, along with fellow Lady Raider junior forward Brandi Brown.

Head Coach Rick Insell was also named the conference's Coach of the Year. This was based on a vote by his peers and is the second such award for Insell in only four seasons at MT.

The Lady Raiders clenched the No. 1 seed in the upcoming Sun Belt championships and will play the winner of the No. 13 Louisiana-Lafayette vs. No. 4 Troy game. The Lady Raiders will begin their quarterfinals play on March 7th in Hot Springs, Ark.

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