

I hope you have had a productive academic year as the end of the Spring semester approaches. It has been a challenging and rewarding academic year. We continue to make progress in achieving our strategic goals despite some setback encountered due to the state budget problems. Our successes are direct results of your commitment and dedication to this institution.



This newsletter contains the latest updates on activities at the University.

News and Information

Spring 2003 Commencement Speaker



Governor Phil Bredesen has agreed to be the commencement speaker for the Spring 2003 commencement ceremony, scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 2003, at 10:00 a.m. in Murphy Center. We expect a record number of graduates.

Budget Update

The University's impoundment budget and permanent base budget reduction plans have been completed and submitted to the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Central office. The budget reductions plans have been approved by TBR Chancellor Charles Manning.

You may recall that due to the State's budget shortfall, we were required to reduce our current year budget by \$4.2 million and cut our base budget for next year by \$7.8 million. The actual dollar reductions amount to 5% and 9% respectively. Budget reductions of this magnitude are very difficult and result in significant negative impact on personnel, services, and programs.

In an effort to minimize the impact on the academic programs at the University, the academic colleges and departments were exempt from impoundment cuts. Protecting academics as much as possible is a major priority. While we were able to avoid impoundment cuts in the academic areas, we were not able to complete the permanent base reductions for next year without impacting the academic departments and colleges. However, the base reduction plans place a heavier burden on the non-academic units. The resulting impact of the cuts on all areas of the university is significant. The University has eliminated over 80 positions. The vast majority of the positions eliminated were vacant. Thirteen (13) positions were not vacant. In addition, many support programs and services have been either eliminated or greatly reduced. Operating budgets of all departments have been reduced. The level of services in some areas of the University will be curtailed.



These budget reductions certainly have been difficult and disappointing to all of us who are dedicated to moving the University toward achieving its goals and objectives.

I particularly would like to thank deans, department chairs, and other senior administrators for their positive attitude and approach in managing the process. Real leadership qualities are

evident during challenging and difficult times. I commend all those involved during the past few months for the fine leadership demonstrated.

Reduction in Force Plan

The University's Reduction in Force (RIF) plan was approved by the Chancellor's office last week. The RIF plan outlines the institution's policies and procedures for handling employee lay-offs resulting in budget reductions. In the coming weeks you will hear about employees whose jobs have been eliminated as a result of the budget cuts. We made every effort to avoid cutting positions; however, we were unable to carry out the reductions without lay-offs. Approximately 13 filled positions were eliminated. Our RIF plan calls for finding jobs in other areas of the University, if available, for those being laid-off. We are making every effort to place these affected individuals in other campus positions that might be available.

Looking Ahead

The University is now moving forward in preparing its budget for 2003-04. During the past few weeks we have been conducting budget hearings with the various units to plan for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget hearings are going well. Our budget for next year will be completed after the legislature approves the 2003-04 state appropriation and TBR sets tuition and fees for the new academic year. Our priority for any new revenue generated from tuition and fees will be the restoration of faculty positions eliminated due to the budget reductions.

Troy State University

Several months ago it was reported in various media that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) had approved a request from Troy State University located in Troy, Alabama, to open a campus in Smyrna to offer two graduate programs in education and business. This action was taken without MTSU's involvement. At that time, I expressed concerns regarding the possible impact of this action on our institution.



Subsequent to THEC's action on Troy State, I hosted two meetings with officials from Troy State University to discuss their plans to open a campus in Smyrna. As a result of these discussions, Troy State officials decided to drop their plans for the opening of the new campus. The Chancellor of Troy State University issued a statement that noted....



"We felt it was in the best interests for both universities for MTSU to offer programs for this graduate population," Chancellor Hawkins said. "Both universities have a rich tradition of teaching excellence, so it was a matter of what would be the best use of resources that would meet the needs of these students. We appreciate the interest by THEC and the insights we received from MTSU."

I am pleased with the resolution of this matter. We must now focus our efforts on serving all areas of Rutherford County.


Recently Approved New Academic Programs

I am pleased to report the approval of several academic programs by the TBR and THEC. These new academic programs are consistent with our Academic Master Plan. The new programs are




New graduate certificates

-  Dyslexic Studies
-  Nursing Informatics



New undergraduate program

-  Bachelor of Science with a major in Concrete Industry Management

New degree concentrations

-  Secondary English Teacher Licensure
-  Genetics and Biotechnology
-  Physiology

New interdisciplinary minors

-  Linguistics Studies
-  Russian Studies



Administrative Staff



This past month, Ms. Sadie Rosson, who served as special assistant to the president for legal affairs, took a new position at the State Department of Transportation as general counsel for the department. Dr. David Hays has been appointed interim special assistant to the president for legal affairs. A local search is underway for a permanent appointment.



Mr. John Cothorn has assumed the permanent position as vice president for Business and Finance. Mr. Cothorn served in an interim role since January of this year.



Mr. Kirk Purdom will join the University as the new director of development. Mr. Purdom assumes the position formerly held by Mr. David Bass who left last fall for a position at Vanderbilt University.

I trust that you will continue to find this e-newsletter informative and useful. I welcome your feedback and comments. And as always, I appreciate all that you do to support the goals and objectives of this great public university. Please send your comments to smcphee@mtsu.edu.