

In my last newsletter I welcomed you back from the holiday season as we began the Spring 2002 semester. Today, I wish you good health and happiness as you begin the summer break of 2002.

This has been an exciting and rewarding first year for me as MTSU's new president. I have enjoyed meeting many of you and look forward to working with you in our efforts to make MTSU one of the best comprehensive universities in the nation. Our accomplishments this academic year are due to the efforts and dedication of each of you as faculty, staff, and administrators. I continue to appreciate all that you do for MTSU.

On a personal note, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all of you who participated in the recent inaugural activities. I believe that the events provided an opportunity to highlight the tremendous talents of our faculty and students to members of the community and to visitors from across the country. In particular, the "Evening of Dance" and the performance by the wind ensemble during the Inaugural Ceremony showcased the excellent programs, faculty, and students we have on our campus. Finally, I would like to offer special thanks to Professor June McCash, Mrs. Kitty Murfree, and members of the Inaugural Planning Committee for their superb job.

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## **News and Information**

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### **Honors College Update**

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Paul W. Martin, Sr. Honors College Building on March 13 was truly a day of celebration. Its completion date is Fall 2003. The Honors College has become an integral part of our campus community, attracting high ability students to MTSU. Dean Montgomery is working with an ad hoc committee to establish a plan to enhance the programs and services offered through the College.



## **Research and Creative Activity**

One of the goals of the University is to strengthen the research and creative activity role of the faculty. I was pleased to see faculty representation and presentations from throughout the University at the recent annual research symposium. It is clear that faculty members not only recognize the importance of research/creative activity as part of the professorial responsibilities in a major comprehensive university, but also support it by being actively involved. Like good teaching, research and creative activity are an integral part of the mission of the University and supports the teaching function.



## **MTSU Graduate Council**

A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure of meeting with the MTSU Graduate Council. At that meeting, I reaffirmed the importance of graduate education and its complementary faculty/student research and creative activity expectations. The Graduate Council, representing each College in the University and many of our departments, stressed the importance of emphasizing research/creative activity in our mission of teaching and service. The Council will be involved in recommending policies and programs to support research and graduate education.

## **Fall 2002 Enrollment**

Reports from the Office of Enrollment Management show significant increase in Fall 2002 Application Activity. The reports indicate that we have a record number of students seeking admission to MTSU for the Fall Semester. The number of accepted applicants for the freshmen class is 861 greater than the number at this time last year. We are also up in accepted transfer applicants, 70 over this time last year, and readmission applicants, 175 over this time last year. I think it is safe to say that the 2002-2003 AY will be another growth year for us. We will closely monitor the application activity for the new academic year. The current budget crisis will have an impact on the number of students we will be able to accommodate. We are in the process of developing an overall enrollment management plan for the University.

## **New Classroom Furniture**

Last fall I allocated resources to purchase new classroom furniture for three of our classroom buildings. Replacement of this of furniture was badly needed. Phase 1 of the Classroom Furniture Upgrade was completed during spring break, affecting approximately 50 classrooms in KOM and Peck Hall. Phase 2 of the Classroom Furniture Upgrade is being finalized, with delivery scheduled for August. Phase 2 will replace classroom furniture in over 50 classrooms in the following 12 buildings: Murphy Center, Alumni Memorial Gym, James Union Building, Jones Hall, Saunders Fine Arts Building, Boutwell Dramatic Arts Building, Forrest Hall, Davis Science Building, Wisner-Patten Science Hall, Ellington Human Sciences Building, Stark Agriculture Building, and the Art Annex. We will continue our efforts to improve our learning facilities and environment. I want to thank Dr. Bill Connelly and his committee for their good work on this project.

## **Belle Aire and St. Marks Renovations**

As many of you already know, our university has acquired the Belle Aire and St. Marks properties. Work is underway to get the Belle Aire Building up to code. Programs and units we are considering for use of this space include the Tennessee Center for the Advancement of Science, Mathematics, and Technology Education (funded by NASA), Continuing Studies, Theatre, Early Childhood program and the TECTA Grant. Completion of renovation is scheduled for this summer. At this time, plans are also being developed for the use of the St. Marks property.



## **Tennessee Board of Regents' (TBR) "Defining Our Future" Report**

There are a number of initiatives associated with TBR's "Defining Our Future" that are currently under way. Plans are being developed to implement recommendations regarding:

- ✓ *Reduction of the credit hours to graduate to 120 hours for baccalaureate degrees (with some exceptions for accreditation)*
- ✓ *Removal of remedial courses from the university offerings*
- ✓ *Review of low producing programs*

- ✓ *Review of off-campus centers*
- ✓ *Review of the minimum requirement for general education*
- ✓ *Development of an enrollment plan with an optimal size for each institution in the system*

All of these changes will have a significant impact on our university. I encourage you to keep informed of these activities.

### **Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) Action Plan**

Most of you have read from newspaper accounts about THEC's 11 recommendations under consideration for higher education. I have gone on record expressing great concerns regarding four of the recommendations. If these four recommendations are approved and implemented, MTSU will be significantly adversely impacted more than any other public institution within the TBR or UT systems. The recommendations of greatest concern focus on the following:

1. *Restricting the approval of doctoral programs to the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and the University of Memphis. Tennessee State University will be allowed to offer doctoral degrees as an exception because of Geier*
2. *Capping enrollment at 3% level with a penalty of taking away the tuition dollars generated by student enrollment above 3%*
3. *Removal of all developmental courses from the university level*
4. *Removal of state appropriation for athletics and shifting the cost of athletics to student fees*

The Tennessee Board of Regents is developing a system-wide response expressing concerns regarding these recommendations. THEC has approved "in principle" the proposals at its April 2002 meeting. The Commission will consider the recommendations at its July meeting.

### **Doctorate of Arts (DA) Conversion**

The request to convert three of our DA programs to PhD programs remains on the desk of the executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

THEC has declared four of our DA programs, Chemistry, Economics, English, and History as "low producing programs." A report defending the continuation of these programs is due to TBR on October 15, 2002. I will

continue my efforts to aggressively pursue the approval of the DA conversion to PhDs. It is essential that we gain final approval of these DAs in order for us to maintain our status as a comprehensive doctoral degree granting institution.

## **University-wide Committees**

### ***Academic Master Plan Review Committee***

*Chair – Professor Phil Mathis*

The Academic Master Plan Review Committee is close to completing its work after eight months of deliberation and consultation. The Committee recently conducted an open forum to get feedback from faculty, staff, and students on the draft plan entitled “Blueprint for Excellence.” The Plan outlines university strategic goals and objectives for the period 2002-2006 and 2007-2012. You may access a copy of the draft plan at <http://www.mtsu.edu/~pvpaa/univcomm/acad/ampnew.htm>. I encourage you to give us your feedback.

### ***Committee on Institutional Efficiency Committee***

*Chair – Dean James Burton*

This committee has submitted a number of interim recommendations for consideration. A final report is forthcoming. For further information on the work of this committee, please contact Dean Jim Burton of the Jennings A. Jones College of Business.



### ***Phi Beta Kappa Exploratory Committee***

*Chair – Professor John Vile*

Professor Vile’s committee has endorsed the goal of pursuing a Phi Beta Kappa chapter for the University. The Committee is currently developing a plan of action to support this goal.

### ***Classroom Laboratory Utilization and Effectiveness (CLUE) Committee***

*Chair – Professor Diane Miller*

The Committee has concluded its work and has submitted its report to me. The Committee responded to the following charges:

- ✓ *To develop utilization targets for all classrooms*
- ✓ *To establish a system of annual review for continuous improvement of labs and classroom space*
- ✓ *To recommend ways to consolidate computer labs for more effective uses of resources*
- ✓ *To recommend ways for greater student access to computer laboratory resources*
- ✓ *To suggest ways to create a collaborative environment for the use of lab and classroom resources*

The Committee made their recommendations available to the campus community for feedback. The comments were compiled and used to finalize their recommendations. A copy of their report can be found at [www.mtsu.edu/~clue](http://www.mtsu.edu/~clue). My thanks to all members of this committee for the time and commitment invested in producing their report. We will develop an implementation plan for the recommendations.

## **University Faculty Athletic Representative**



Professor Race Bergman has announced his retirement from the University at the end of this academic year. In addition to his faculty and administrative appointment, he served as the Faculty Representative for Athletics. Professor Bergman has done an outstanding job during his tenure at the University. We wish him well as he enters a new phase of his life.

I am pleased to announce that Professor Terry Whiteside of the Psychology Department has accepted the appointment as the University Faculty Athletic Representative. This is a very important position and I am confident that Professor Whiteside will serve the University well in his new role.

## **University-wide Administrative Search Update**

As you know, searches are underway for several key administrative positions. We are in the final phase of completing the search for the deans of Mass Communication and Basic and Applied Sciences. Candidates have been interviewed and a decision on both positions should be announced shortly.

The Search Committee for the Executive Vice President and Provost position has recommended a list of five finalists to be considered for on-campus interviews. The Committee will conduct reference and background checks during the summer with on-campus interviews to be conducted in early Fall 2002.

The Vice President for Development and University Relations search is progressing. The Committee is in the process of recommending a list of finalists to be considered for on-campus interviews within the next month. We hope to have a person named by late summer with a start-date of early Fall 2002.

## **Legislative Update**

There is little to report on the legislative front since my last newsletter to you. At this time, the Legislature has taken no action on next year's budget. The reports from Nashville show that the deficit continues to increase for this fiscal year and next. The University's budget for the 2002-2003 fiscal year totally depends on the decision of the Legislature. I hope we will have some idea about our budget in the next 3-4 weeks. If the Legislature decides to approve a "no revenue budget" for the next year, our university will be faced with budget cut of approximately \$7-8 million. This will have a significant negative impact on personnel, tuition, and fees and university programs and services.



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I hope you find this news and update helpful. It is designed to keep you informed about matters affecting the University. Please send your comments to [smcphoe@mtsu.edu](mailto:smcphoe@mtsu.edu).