



Welcome back!

As we conclude the second week of the Spring 2002 semester, I would like to welcome you back to the University. I trust that you and your family had an enjoyable holiday season and that you are now looking forward to an exciting and challenging new year.

In completing my first semester as the new president, I continue to be excited about the future of our University. While there are many challenges that lie ahead, I believe we are well positioned as an institution to move forward as one of the great public universities in the country. Our accomplishments over the years are directly attributed to the dedication and commitment of each of you as faculty, staff, and administrators who have given much to the University. I am very grateful for all that you do for MTSU.

One of my goals is to maintain an open channel of communication with the University community. Throughout the academic year I plan on providing news and information from my office to you. I invite your feedback on any item in the newsletter or any other matter. Your comments are appreciated.

News and Information

2002 Legislative Session

The 102nd Tennessee General Assembly has convened. The major focus for members of the Assembly during the past week was on "redistricting." While there will be other important issues and legislation addressed during this legislative session, the state's current budget crisis will undoubtedly take center stage. The anticipated deficit in the state budget for next fiscal year is estimated to be several hundred million dollars without new sources of revenue. The actions taken by the Legislature to address the budget challenges will have a significant impact on the funding for higher education in this state. I will keep you informed as the session progresses.

Spring Enrollment

The preliminary student enrollment for Spring 2002 is approximately 5.3% above Spring 2001 semester. Final enrollment statistics will be available in a few weeks. This semester's enrollment increase follows a 5% increase last fall, resulting in a total headcount of more than 20,000 students. This growth in student enrollment certainly presents opportunities and challenges for the campus.

Martin Honors College Match Met

After much effort on behalf of many individuals, we have successfully completed the \$2 million match to construct the \$4 million Paul Martin, Sr. Honors College Building. MTSU is grateful to the individuals, corporations, and foundations who contributed to this most worthy project. Groundbreaking will be held in early spring, with construction to follow.



TBR Defining Our Future Report

At the December Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Quarterly Board Meeting, the Board approved a series of recommendations and policy changes addressing how TBR institutions will respond to declining state funds to colleges and universities. The report, which was submitted to the General Assembly, focused on the following areas:

- ✓ Remedial and developmental program offerings
- ✓ Total credit hours for graduation requirements
- ✓ Transfer and articulation matters
- ✓ Academic program duplications
- ✓ High cost academic programs

The TBR staff at the Central Office is developing a comprehensive implementation plan for each of the recommendations. Additional information will be forthcoming from TBR on the impact of these changes for our institution. I will keep you informed on these developments. A copy of the "TBR Defining Our Future" report is available in the Faculty Senate

office, the Office of the President, or at http://www.tbr.state.tn.us/press_releases/definingfuture.htm.

Universitywide Committees

Last fall, I appointed four ad hoc universitywide committees. They are as follows:

Academic Master Plan Review Committee

Committee Chair – Professor Phil Mathis

The Committee has the task of updating our current Academic Master Plan and making recommendation concerning academic initiatives for the future. This committee is hard at work and making good progress. A report is due by late spring.

Committee on Institutional Efficiency

Committee Chair – Dean James Burton

The Committee's charge is to review and recommend ways to make the University more efficient and effective given the current financial difficulties of the state. I have also asked the committee to discuss and recommend potential programs and services for consolidation and elimination.



Phi Beta Kappa Exploratory Committee

Committee Chair – Professor John Vile

The Committee's task is to review and discuss MTSU's readiness for pursuing a Phi Beta Kappa chapter. The Committee will prepare and submit a plan of action with strategies and timeline for implementation.

Classroom Laboratory Utilization and Effectiveness Committee

Committee Chair – Professor Diane Miller

The Committee will discuss ideas to improve labs and classroom space. It will also recommend ways to consolidate computer labs for more effective uses of resources, to recommend ways for greater student access, and to discuss ways to create a collaborative environment for the use of labs and classrooms.

The underlying purpose of all of the committees is to enhance the overall academic quality of the institution. A secondary purpose is to position the University to become one of the best comprehensive universities in the nation.

Doctorate of Arts (DA) Conversion

The conversion of the three DA degrees to PhD programs (Economics, English, and Human Performance) continues to be a top priority. The DA conversions were approved by TBR in March 2001, and were forwarded to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) for final approval. Due to the state current budget problems, THEC has instituted a moratorium on all program approvals. It is my intent to pursue approval of these programs at the July 2002 THEC meeting.

Inauguration

Inauguration ceremonies are being scheduled for Friday, April 19, 2002, on our campus. Ms. Kitty Murfree and Dr. June McCash are co-chairing the Inauguration Committee. Please mark this date on your calendar.

Deans' Searches

The search process for the Dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences and the College of Mass Communication began last fall and is well underway. I anticipate that both searches will be completed by late spring, with positions being filled by Fall 2002.

Reorganization

During the past six months, I have been evaluating the current university administrative structure to determine appropriate organizational changes. I am in the final process of this evaluation and will be announcing reorganizational decisions shortly.

I hope you find this news and update helpful. It is designed to keep you informed about matters affecting the University. Please send you comments to smcpee@mtsu.edu.