

Dr. Sidney A. McPhee

August 29, 2011



PRESIDENT'S GREETING

Welcome to the fall 2011 semester!

The centennial of our founding is just days away and, with it, the beginning of a yearlong celebration of our remarkable University's history and its future. As I reflect upon the prospects ahead for this year, I feel a sense of tremendous anticipation.

MTSU is building upon its strong reputation as an academic trendsetter, providing a productive, challenging environment for student learning—and continuing as a great workplace for faculty and staff.

Now in my eleventh year as president of MTSU, I can tell you that these are

EXCITING times for the University.

We have emerged from our efforts to reposition the institution. Even amid our continuing budget challenges, we are a strong and determined University. And we enter our second century with strong momentum, exceptional promise, and enormous potential. I look forward to working with each of you as we reach our future prospects and forge opportunities ahead.

As always, I appreciate the good work each of you do as employees of this fine university. I hope you have a productive new academic year. Finally, I do appreciate any comments or feedback on this edition of my newsletter.

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

Sept. 11 is our birthday, but we'll be celebrating all year long.

During the 2011–12 academic year, we will have a yearlong observance of our founding a century ago as the first of the state's three Normal Schools and our development into a comprehensive public university that has garnered national and international recognition for excellence. We hope everyone in the University community will help us celebrate this significant birthday.

Please view the Centennial website (www.mtsu.edu/centennial), and accompanying Facebook page, which features almost anything you might want to know about MTSU's founding. It has a history timeline, videos, vintage photographs and a link to purchase Centennial merchandise. There's even a clock counting down the last days, hours, and minutes until the Centennial Gala—the event that will officially kickoff a year of festivities celebrating MTSU's 100 years.

The Blue Tie Gala, set for 6 p.m., Friday, Sept. 9, at the Embassy Suites in

Murfreesboro, has been completely sold out for months, and we're anticipating an excellent event. Also, the next day (Sept. 10), we will gather at 2:30 p.m. for a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new College of Education building. I hope you can join us for this event.

It is altogether fitting and proper that we spend part of our Centennial birthday weekend to specifically honor and recognize the College of Education because it represents our roots, planted a century ago, as a training institution for Tennessee's teachers.

There will be Centennial-themed events throughout the year, so please check our website often for more commemorations. Meanwhile, preparations are almost complete for another signature event: Homecoming (Oct. 1) will also have a Centennial flavor, with a theme of "Look to the Future—Remember the Past."

If you have questions about the University Centennial celebration, please email centennial@mtsu.edu.

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Fifth-Year Accreditation Review

We're in the midst of extensive preparations for the Fifth-Year Accreditation Report for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This is a very important assessment review process we are going through and I deeply appreciate everyone's attention and focus on this work.

BUDGET AND SALARY OVERVIEW

I've often spoken of our hard work and efforts in implementing the series of recommendations outlined in our Positioning the University for the Future initiative. These efforts identified ways to reduce costs and improve efficiencies while protecting and, in some cases, enhancing selected programs central to our mission and future.

Because we tackled the challenges head-on and focused on moving the University forward, we entered this new fiscal year fully prepared to address the significant budget reductions without major disruptions to the University's day-to-day operation.

Since July 1, 2008, our state appropriations have been reduced by approximately \$33 million, or 33 percent. In addition, this year's budget does not contain any federal stimulus money. Unfortunately, as government support dwindles, we continue to face additional inflationary costs including increased utilities, benefits, and supplies that require funding to operate.

We were able to address the major financial reduction by taking a proactive approach through good management and some one-time financial allocations due to the phase-in of a new outcomes-based funding formula by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. As a result, **for**

this new fiscal year, no division of the university will be asked to make any additional cuts beyond those made or already planned.

Also, this past June, the Tennessee Board of Regents approved a **9.8 percent increase in tuition and fees** for 2011–12, which will help us mitigate a growing imbalance caused by hiring more full-time temporary professors in lieu of tenure-track faculty.

It will also replace part of the reduced state appropriations over the last four years, help lessen the impact of some of our inflation costs, and cover a pay raise for faculty and staff that was mandated but not fully funded in this year's state budget.

As you well know, higher education employees have worked without cost of living increases or general raises for the past four years. I am pleased to report that the Tennessee Board of Regents approved a **three percent Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) salary increase** or \$750, whichever was greater, for regular employees, both full- and part-time, on the payroll as of June 30, 2011.

The salary increase was effective July 1, 2011, and was included in the 12-month faculty and nonfaculty employees' July salary payment. It will be in the August salary payment for nine-month faculty.

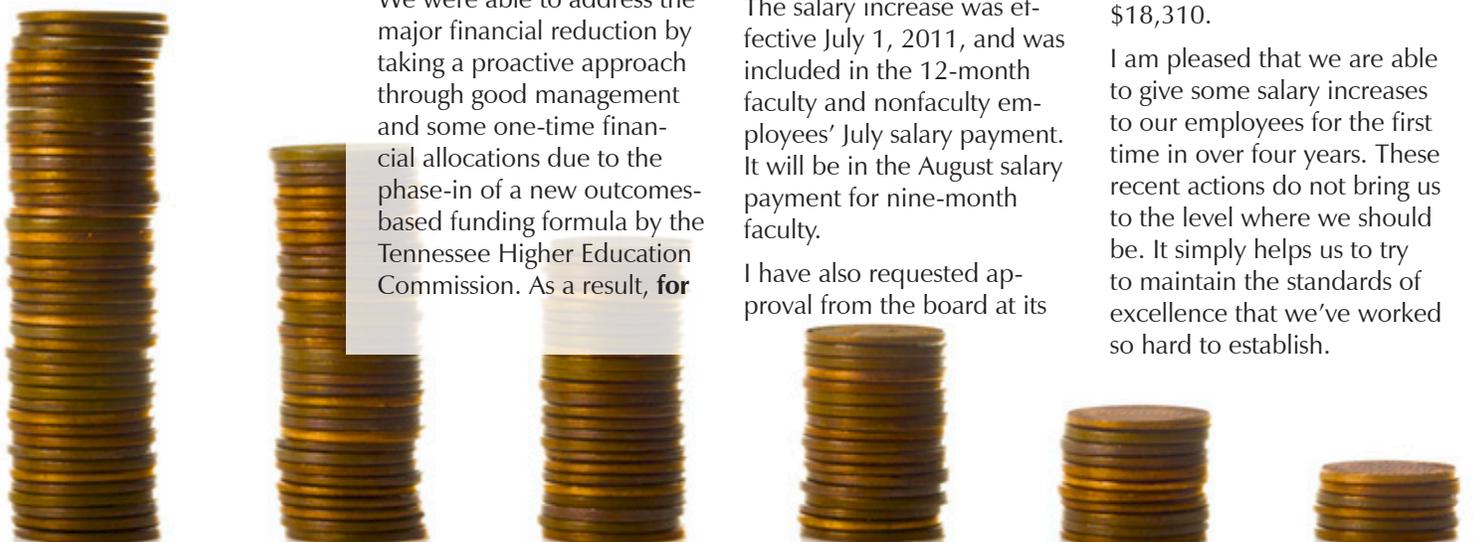
I have also requested approval from the board at its

upcoming meeting in September to grant additional salary increases effective January 1, 2012. These additional increases for faculty and staff will be based on approved compensation plans for each employee classification. It should be noted that not everyone will receive an increase as part of this additional pay plan implementation. Increases will depend on where the employee falls under the plan. Faculty members as a group will receive approximately 78 percent of the additional salary enhancement pool.

Further, I have requested approval from the board to give a one-time payment bonus of \$1,000 per full-time employee, prorated for part-time employees, who have at least two years of service as of September 30, 2011, and are in active employment status as of that date. That payment, if approved, will be paid in October of this year.

In addition, I have requested approval from the board to increase the compensation of 33 MTSU employees whose salary as of June 30, 2011, was below the 2009–10 Federal Poverty Guideline of \$18,310.

I am pleased that we are able to give some salary increases to our employees for the first time in over four years. These recent actions do not bring us to the level where we should be. It simply helps us to try to maintain the standards of excellence that we've worked so hard to establish.



CAPITAL PROJECTS/ CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Work continues on numerous capital projects across our campus.

The new **College of Education building is complete** and ready for classes this fall. The building adds over 80 faculty offices and approximately 1,000 classroom seats, including a 150-seat tiered lecture hall, a 75-seat classroom, and smaller classrooms that support flexible, collaborative teaching technologies.

The **Student Union** is expected to be ready for occupancy in summer 2012. The building features a new food court, a new bookstore, a ballroom that will hold 850 at dining tables, a student meeting space, student organization offices, an SGA Parliamentary room, a collaborative computer center, a game room, and informal student gathering spaces.

A new **student quadrangle**, located between these two new buildings, contains raised seat walls and an expansive central lawn. A perimeter history walk highlights SGA leaders over the years, and University milestones by decade are inscribed in granite bands.

Planning is underway on the new **Student Services Building** project, which will relocate all “one-stop” functions related to admissions, records and enrollment, financial aid, scheduling, bursar’s, and academic advising. The facility will serve as a starting point for campus tours and as the primary visitor’s center for prospective students and their families.

That project will also include two new student parking deck structures, located adjacent to the Campus Recreation Center and in the Holmes Building lot, to give students convenient access to the academic core of campus. Each deck will contain approximately 480 spaces for cars. The deck adjacent to the Student Services Building will include a bridge through that building and extend to the Ballroom level of the new Student Union.

Architects have finished plans for a new **student media center** on the first floor of the College of Mass Communication’s John Bragg Building. Construction is underway and is expected to be finished by the end of the semester. This innovative project will allow us to relocate and focus our campus media operations at a single location. It will house *Sidelines*, the student newspaper; radio stations WMOT and WMTS; and our student record label office.

Plans are underway to renovate the **McWherter Learning Resources Center** to house the interior design and textiles, merchandising, and design programs. Construction will begin this December and extend through the summer of 2012.

Women’s basketball offices on the lower level of Murphy Center are under construction and will be complete by fall—the result of a generous gift by alumnus Ken Shipp.

Renovation of **Deere and Nicks Halls** continues on schedule and marks the



near-completion of a 10-year renovation master plan of the primary housing buildings.

Construction continues on **roadway improvements** that will widen and improve MTSU Boulevard from the rotary to Jones Hall for more efficient shuttle bus service and improved pedestrian walkways and lighting. The project will extend Blue Raider Drive northward to a new campus entrance at Greenland Drive that will continue to improve internal campus traffic flow and will support access to the new parking decks. Construction will be substantially complete in spring 2012.

A project to **improve lighting campus-wide** is currently underway. New pedestrian lamps and lamp heads will improve nighttime visibility, lessen glare and light pollution, and reduce overall energy usage. The project will be substantially complete in the fall, with additional lighting improvements to be completed around housing areas in the spring of 2012.

Science Building Update

While there was no state appropriation for new capital construction, **we remain hopeful that our critical need for a new science building will be met.** Several key legislators came to campus last December to tour our existing facilities and learn first-hand why this project is so important to our mission. The project remains THEC’s number-one capital outlay priority.

In my 11 years at MTSU, I have never been more confident that state decision makers are going to find a way soon to fund a new MTSU science building. Based on all the feedback I’ve been receiving, I feel very good about the prospects that through some form of state funding—be it bonds or some other source of revenue -- we will be breaking ground sooner rather than later on a vital new science building at MTSU.





ATHLETIC GOALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Our athletes succeed in the classroom as well as on their respective fields of competition. This was vividly illustrated when MTSU became one of seven Sun Belt institutions to place all of its sports teams above the 925-point mark on the Academic Progress Rate (APR) report released in May by the NCAA.

During the spring 2011 semester, 138 of 301 (46 percent) of MTSU student-athletes earned a grade point average of 3.0 or higher, 69 made the Dean's List, and 23 had perfect 4.0 GPAs.

Three MTSU athletic programs—the most in the Sun Belt Conference—earned Public Recognition Awards from the NCAA. Blue Raider football, men's tennis, and men's golf were recognized for the award, which is based on their most recent, multiyear Academic Progress Rates. These awards are given each year to teams scoring in the top 10 percent in their sports.

Now those are athletic statistics worth bragging about!

On the field, all three programs competed in postseason play and helped **MTSU secure its third straight Sun Belt All-Sports Trophy: the Vic Bubas Cup.**

Here are some other athletic highlights:

- MTSU won or shared **six Sun Belt Conference championships** during the 2010–11 campaign.
- MTSU athletics were the focal point of **12 nationally-televised events** during the 2010–11 season, and there were also **15 regional broadcasts.**
- Men's golfer **Brett Patterson competed in the U.S. Open Championship** in mid-June—a first for a Blue Raider amateur.
- MTSU won **four Coach of the Year honors.**
- MTSU boasted **five All-Americans and two Academic All-Americans.**
- MTSU garnered **four National Player of the Week honors.**
- Two MTSU student-athletes were named **SBC Players of the Year.**
- Student-athletes won **26 individual conference championships.**
- Twenty-nine student-athletes were named to **postseason all-conference teams** (not including track).
- Five student-athletes earned **all-region recognition.**
- Three MTSU student-athletes competed in the **World University Games** this August in China (Jason Millard, golf; Izabela Kozon, volleyball; and Sarah Nambawa, track). Also, former student-athlete Lisa-Marie Woods represented Norway in the **World Cup** in June.

I'd also like to recognize our football coach—**Rick Stockstill**—for being named one of the **top 10 coaches in America for academic progress**, joining coaches from universities such as Duke, Northwestern, and Georgia Tech.

FUNDRAISING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

I am proud to report that this was a banner year in private fundraising for MTSU. Compared to the previous year, [giving was up by more than 30 percent](#)—well above national projections. The MTSU Foundation received more than \$8.5 million in gifts this year. The greatest increase in support has been in the area of large gifts. This is a remarkable statistic and a true pride point for us all—especially during a period when the economy is struggling to rebound from a recession.

We are grateful to alumni and friends whose professional and personal success—and their subsequent generosity—will serve as examples to thousands of MTSU students in years to come. My appreciation and thanks also goes to our entire University Development team for their hard work.

But our work here is not finished. With state and federal funding sources

stagnating, we have to take full advantage of opportunities to expand further sources of private giving, expand our research and service base, and look for entrepreneurial ways to generate revenue while protecting our core academic mission.

I hope you share my belief that development is not the sole responsibility of the Development Office. It begins on the day our students enroll in our institution and enter into a relationship with our University. How we handle those students—from advising to the classroom, from student services to the residence halls—determines whether or not that relationship will mature and grow into something they will someday consider valuable enough to reward with their continued support. I appreciate your role in making all of those interactions a positive experience for our students.

CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

MTSU has plans to install new technology campus-wide that will allow students, faculty, and staff free, anytime access to virtual desktops, programs, personal files, and network resources.

The new service is called **MyMT**, and secure access will be as simple as opening any browser, going to the URL, and logging in with a username and password. A multiphase rollout approach will allow us to have more than 2,000 devices virtualized by the fall, after which the process will continue across the rest of campus. The final phase will enable remote capability: **students, faculty, and staff will have simple, secure access to virtual desktops, applications, network resources, and file storage from any device**—PC, Mac, notebook, tablet device, or smart phone, on or off

campus, University-owned or personally owned, at any time, 365 days a year.

The systems are expected to reduce MTSU's desktop computing costs by more than 35 percent and allow the University to reduce electricity consumption.

By year's end, a new distributed antenna system will also be operational, adding significant **new wireless coverage** and capacity to campus. This elimination of dead zones on campus will be particularly important with emergency notification.

I am committed to ensuring that our students, faculty, and staff are offered the very best technologies to enable them to learn, collaborate, and access information that ultimately impacts student outcomes in a positive way.

Revamped Marketing and Communications Efforts

I am very proud of the relaunch of *MTSU Magazine*, our University's premium print platform, which published its second issue this month. Also, as we reformat our communications efforts, I encourage all of you to visit our new digital information site, www.mtsunews.com, for real-time delivery of news, video, and other multimedia features about the University. Our Marketing and Communications team is keeping pace with changing audience demands and works hard to deliver stories about our successes.



TASK FORCE ON NONVIOLENCE/CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The death of a student is always a grievous loss on a campus. In the case of the off-campus murder of former Lady Raider basketball player Tina Stewart in early 2011, the loss was particularly senseless and appalling. Such violence has no place in and around a college campus—or anywhere, for that matter.

In a public ceremony after Stewart's murder, I said that Tina's death must have the effect of making us all more tolerant and more kind to each other and to make us value each other more fully as a life force, and as an irreplaceable contributor.

At that time, I also vowed to enhance the University's role in advocating nonviolence in the MTSU community. To do so, I created a task force that met regularly for several months and developed a series of new initiatives for the campus community to strengthen the message of tolerance and nonviolence between students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of MTSU.

Early meetings of the task force focused on reviewing similar existing programs at other institutions. These included programs at Kansas State and American University and the national "Enough Is Enough" campaign, sponsored in part through NASPA, Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

After much discussion, task force members concluded that an updated statement of commitment should serve as the foundation for the campus-wide campaign. The new statement reads as follows:

- MTSU is committed to developing and nurturing a community devoted to learning, growth, and service. Each person who joins or affiliates with the community does so freely and accepts and practices the following core values and expectations:
- **Honesty and Integrity.** The notions of personal and academic honesty and integrity are central to the existence of the MTSU community. All members of the community will strive to achieve and maintain the highest standards of academic achievement in the classroom and personal and social responsibility on and off campus.
- **Respect for Diversity.** The MTSU community is composed of individuals representing different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, cultures, and ways of thinking. We respect individual differences and unique perspectives and acknowledge our commonalities.
- **Engagement in the Community.** All members of the community are encouraged to participate in educationally purposeful activities that support and enhance the MTSU experience. Active involvement and personal investment in the classroom and throughout the community are hallmarks of an engaged citizen.

- **Commitment to Nonviolence.** MTSU is committed to the principles of nonviolence and peaceful conflict resolution. Community members will freely express their ideas and resolve differences using reason and persuasion.

The task force also developed plans to infuse the standards and expectations across the MTSU curriculum. Chief among the initiatives underway are the following:

- A general introduction to MTSU Community Standards and Expectations was added to all CUSTOMS orientation programs.
- A teaching module focused on civility and nonviolent conflict resolution is under development and will be added to fall 2011 student leadership training programs for student leaders, RAs, student-athletes, the SGA, and fraternity/sorority members.
- COMM2020 and UNIV1010 classes will include a teaching module focused on civility and nonviolent conflict resolution each semester, beginning in fall 2011.

Finally, the major kickoff activity for the initiative was made part of the University Convocation, where Jeremy Poynter, president of the Student Government Association, led us in the first-ever reading of the "True Blue Pledge," an affirmation based on our core values that we hope will become a campus tradition. Here's the pledge:

I am True Blue.

As a member of this diverse community,
I am a valuable contributor
to its progress and success.
I am engaged in the life of this community.
I am a recipient and a giver.
I am a listener and a speaker.
I am honest in word and deed.
I am committed to reason, not violence.
I am a learner now and forever.

I am a BLUE RAIDER.

True Blue!

"True Blue" is the focus of a comprehensive marketing plan to be rolled out campus-wide during the fall 2011 semester. I deeply appreciate the hard work by the task force as well as all who are involved in developing and furthering these important philosophies and initiatives.





ENROLLMENT FORECAST

Overall, enrollment will likely be similar to last year, at approximately 26,500 students. We will probably have fewer new freshmen but an increase in graduate students and returning students. Retention continues to be strong, and the number of returning seniors is particularly good—which we hope will translate to additional gains in our graduation rates. Our focus continues to be on improving retention and graduation rates rather than increasing overall enrollment, which is consistent with the objectives of the Complete College Tennessee Act recently passed by the state legislature. Both new graduate students and returning **graduate student enrollment is projected to be up by more than five percent this year!**



CHANGES TO ADVISING; ACADEMIC ALERTS

This year, the University College carried out the blueprint for a new model of receiving students into the University. The **MTSU Total Intake Model** provides initial advising to new students to help them solidify career goals and meet expectations set by the academic departments.

This past year, the colleges of Mass Communication, Education, and Behavioral and Health Sciences developed advising guidelines and determined the thresholds at which students could officially declare a major and be assigned a faculty advisor. In this coming school

year, the remaining three colleges will join this effort to better serve, retain, and graduate MTSU students.

A new **Academic Alert program** was also developed and piloted last year as a vehicle for faculty to communicate academic progress to students and concerned monitoring advisors who follow up on faculty concerns. This year, it will be available through Pipeline to all faculty members. Through this retention effort, we hope to improve student performance and scholarship and target resources to students when they most need them.

Greater Focus on Students

In addition to the newly developed Community Standards and Expectations put forth by my task force on nonviolence and conflict resolution (see page 6), we will be placing a top priority on bolstering our student recruitment strategies, retention, and admissions requirements designed to position us for success under the Complete College Tennessee Act.

We continue to work hard to enhance weekend programming for students. And 2011 is the first year for the new Global Learning Community, marking the first year of scholarship support for nontraditional students through the Bernard Osher Foundation.



0711-77 – Middle Tennessee State University is an AA/EEO employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability or age in its program and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies: Executive Director of Institutional Equity and Compliance, 1301 E. Main Street, CAB 220, Murfreesboro, TN 37132, 615-898-2185.

TOBACCO -FREE



MTSU recently joined hundreds of institutions of higher education nationwide by declaring itself a **tobacco-free campus**, restricting the use of all forms of tobacco by students and visitors on MTSU property.

The policy will be fully implemented in January 2012, allowing time for the University community to be educated about the new policy and for the University to provide support to those who wish to stop using tobacco.

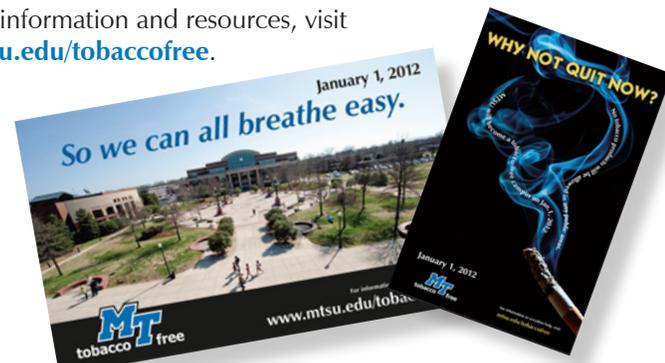
We entered into this action after considerable discussion and reflection, and we are very much aware of the strong views held by those on both sides of this issue.

We feel this policy is not about denying rights; it's about promoting and creating a healthy environment for all.

We are not focusing on tobacco users as much as we are focusing on a behavior in public spaces we all share. Individuals can still use tobacco in their cars and at off-campus locations.

The primary reason for the tobacco-free initiative is to maintain a healthy and safe environment conducive to learning for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

For more information and resources, visit www.mtsu.edu/tobaccofree.



REPORTING FRAUD, WASTE, OR ABUSE

The University is committed to the responsible stewardship of resources; and state law requires all public institutions of higher education to provide a means by which employees, students, or others may report suspected or known fraud, waste or abuse.

Whether you are part of departmental management, a faculty or staff member, a student, or an interested citizen, University leaders encourage you to report known or suspected dishonest acts by employees, outside contractors, or vendors. For more information, go to: www.mtsu.edu/audit/fraud.shtml.

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