Dean’s Message

When invitations went out to participate in our first focus group sessions, CBHS alumni responded beyond my expectations. The open and honest discussions were an awesome, humbling experience that has left me True Blue proud! The sessions and on-demand alumni meetings have produced great suggestions for moving CBHS forward. Suggestions, such as launching a Facebook page, were relatively easy; others like expanding our Ph.D. offerings will take time.

A powerful part of the conversations for me was hearing the one-word descriptions (mostly) that summed up each alum’s MTSU student experience. The deeper explanations and backstories had very common themes - leaving home for the first time, determined to make it, and even more determined to make a difference.

Like so many of our alumni, I chose psychology because I wanted to be of service and help others. MTSU has afforded me that opportunity.

There are those like Jim Holland, Rochelle Bridges-Johnson, and Pam Wright who have used the knowledge, discipline, and skills gained at MTSU to bridge success in industry and enterprise. Kris Thomas, who had us all cheering for his success on The Voice, continues to talk about how his degree in psychology provides him with tools for self-coaching as a singer and songwriter.

We want to tell the stories of these alumni and many others who are finding great success in their degree fields. Jan Hildon, a CBHS Advisory Board Member, has earned three nursing degrees and might pursue a fourth if we can get a Ph.D. program. There is more than one reason that we need to share these stories with you and with the world. Each time any CBHS alum has a notable achievement or success, it increases the “value of degree” for all. Not only that, it gives us bragging rights. “Little Middle” no longer applies!

Alums are the greatest testament of how great a university is and can be. Strong alumni engagements and networks can have a positive influence on student recruitment and retention; expansion of degree offerings; positive and expanded press coverage; and corporate and foundation support—all of which ultimately contribute to increasing the value of every MTSU degree.

We realize how our alumni can help us to become great. The contribution of time, talent, and treasure from CBHS alumni will support our efforts to continue to build a college and University that will keep all of us True Blue proud!

Alums Give the Dean a Piece of Their Minds

Focus Groups Reveal True Blue Alums

During summer 2013, Dean Whiteside conducted CBHS alumni focus group sessions in Brentwood, Murfreesboro, and Nashville. We wanted to learn about our student experiences and their professional and personal journeys. We also wanted to understand how we might strengthen their connection to CBHS and MTSU. Here are some of the suggestions and early follow-up.

Bea Y. Perdue
CBHS Development Director

Alums want to see a CBHS social media presence, (i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter)

We launched the Dean Series, A Focus on New and Better Outcomes, to build community connections and share CBHS wealth of knowledge.

Alums want to know that we are making a concerted effort to dispel the “Little Middle” perception, with more effective marketing and messaging.

We understand that graduates are looking for ways in which the University will continue to add value to their degrees. The three things that most influence the value of a university degree are: the success of graduates, retention and graduation rates of current students, and the successful solicitation of financial support.

We will continue to explore ways to share the success of CBHS graduates and look for opportunities to assist them in building stronger MTSU networks. The value of all degrees will increase exponentially in proportion to the number of relationships that can be established and cultivated personally and professionally. We also shared the thoughts of participants with MTSU marketing and communication leaders.

The College Magazine, Outcomes, will launch in winter 2013.

The first CBHS newsletter was published in spring/summer 2013.

www.mtsu.edu/CBHS

The college launched a Facebook page. Like us at www.facebook.com/MTSUCBHS

Died and Gone to Heaven

(one word was impossible)

One word descriptions from focus group participants in Nashville, hosted by Pam Wright (Psychology ’75).
CBHS Advisory Board Welcomes Alum Kris Thomas Back to MTSU

NBC’s The Voice contestant and CBHS alum Kris Thomas (Psychology ’08) returned to MTSU to perform the national anthem at the MTSU/Memphis game in September. More than thirty guests were on hand, along with Dean Whiteside and members of the CBHS Advisory Board, to greet him.

Alums Creating New and Better Outcomes

Her mother, grandmother and great aunt were MTSU alums and celebrated Tennessee teachers, and her great uncle, James W. Malone, served as a trustee. She is a Commissioners’ Coin of Excellence recipient as a Regional Absconder Representative with thirteen years of service.

Dana Clegg (Family and Consumer Studies ’96)
Department of Children Services, State of Tennessee

A talented designer who also has a passion for environmental conservation and sustainability. She will be encouraging her freshman daughter (Anna) to withstand the rigors of pre-nursing at MTSU.

Mimi Keising (Interior Design ’93)
Environmental Education Coordinator, Rutherford County Government

The confidence she gained as a student, combined with her faith, told her she should take advantage of an offer to move into sales and marketing. She has been recognized for her tremendous success at building and supporting agencies for an insurance giant.

Rochelle Bridges-Johnson (Social Work ’77)
Field Service Leader, Allstate

He earned his degree while working full time to support his family. He continued his passion for his professors, the relevance of his chosen curriculum, and his qualifications upon graduation have propelled his career.

Kawel B. LauBach (I/O ’01)
Chief Human Resources Officer, Mohegan Tribal Gaming Authority

They met pursuing master’s degrees in MTSU’s top ranked Industrial/Organization (I/O) Psychology program. Both executives work to help organizations focus on building, retaining, and growing talent. Both credit the rigorous curriculum and experiential learning at MTSU as keys to their success.

Ali Jerden (I/O ’98) Coca-Cola Corporation
Eddie Jerden (I/O ’99) DDI Atlanta

After serving as a doping control officer for three Olympic Games (London, Vancouver, and Salt Lake City), in 2012 he was appointed to the board of directors of the United States Anti-doping Agency.

Ken Wright (Health and Human Performance ’84)
Professor and Director, Sports Management Program
University of Alabama