The Fall Faculty Fair was held Oct. 25 in the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center (LT&ITC) in the Walker Library. From left are Becky Alexander, associate professor of Elementary and Special Education; Saeed Foroudastan, associate dean of Basic and Applied Sciences; and College of Education graduate student Tylar Maxey.

Alexander demonstrates the OSMO app, which merges physical play with the digital advantages of real-time feedback.

The MTSU Faculty Fair event recognizes faculty members who earned the LT&ITC’s Faculty Fellows designation. From left are Bruce Petryshak, vice president for Information Technology & chief information officer; Mark Byrnes, University provost; and Faculty Fellows honorees for 2017 listed in no particular order: Vishwas Bedekar, Engineering Technology; Christine Eschenfelder, Journalism; Katie Gruber, Communication Studies and Organizational Communication; M.A. Higgs, University Studies; Mark Jackson, English; Misty Jones, Recording Industry; Jing Kong, Chemistry; Natonya Listach, Communication Studies and Organizational Communication; Lucy Matthews, Marketing; and Pamela McCluney, University Studies. Not pictured are Stacey Browning, Nursing; Geeta Maharaj, Nursing; Brian Slaboch, Engineering Technology; and L'Oreal Stephens, Communication Studies and Organizational Communication.
Skype for Business migration at MTSU 99 percent completed

ITD is pleased to announce 99 percent of telephone users have been migrated to Skype for Business, and work is now beginning to decommission the legacy PBX system.

As we do so, we'd like to take a brief opportunity to summarize the migration:

- **S4B Enabled Users:** 3,018
- **S4B Handsets Deployed:** 2,500
- **Other Analog Devices Supported (Elevators, Alarms, Modems, PA Systems):** 300

This certainly has been an opportunity for growth, and while this phase of the project is nearing completion, our work is far from done.

We are eager to begin building on the foundation that is now in place. Unified communications, specifically Skype for Business, gives an opportunity to refine business processes by providing the tools necessary to enhance productivity, work collaboratively, and increase accessibility.

Dynamic Forms gives University departments paperless paperwork option

MTSU has a tool that allows departments to go paperless in processing data-collection “paperwork.”

This tool is called Dynamic Forms and has already been in use by several MTSU departments for over a year.

Dynamic Forms allows you to create digital versions of paper forms for easier and quicker submission. ITD can create the forms or provide a department with training on how to do it yourself.

Web-based forms create an easy and accessible way to gather responses, while eliminating sometimes indecipherable handwriting, omitted information, and misdirected submissions.

Forms can be created that allow secure online completion and electronic signatures, with an optional PDF version for printing.

Users are not limited by business hours to complete required forms, even those requiring multiple electronic signatures in complex workflows.

[Skype Spotlight: Dialing 9 no longer needed]

Drop that 9! When making outbound calls from Skype for Business, you do not need to enter a 9 before the telephone number to complete an off-campus call.

Simply enter the 10-digit telephone number for local calls, or 1+10 digit number for long-distance calls.

Find more instructions at [mtsu.edu/itdtele/skype.php](http://mtsu.edu/itdtele/skype.php).

We encourage you as a Skype for Business user to attend an upcoming S4B workshop to learn more about what unified communications can do for you.

Please visit [mtsu.edu/itd/workshops.php](http://mtsu.edu/itd/workshops.php) for a list of available workshops.

Even non-technical users can customize, design, and publish professional-looking forms without the need for programming knowledge.

Certain data can be pre-uploaded to the form from Banner to save time and keep the form’s completer from having to enter information that MTSU already has.

Also, data can be downloaded from the completed forms and sent directly into Banner and BDMS—MTSU’s imaging system—which eliminates data entry and saves on the cost of processing.

Website-based forms such as Dynamic Forms also help meet accessibility goals. Paper forms do not work for people with vision or mobility impairments, and PDF forms are often just scans of paper forms.

To begin converting paper forms into Dynamic Forms, or creating new forms, put in an ITD work order. For more information, contact James Foster, ITD’s director of Enterprise Application Services, at 615-898-5719 or james.foster@mtsu.edu.

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Faculty Innovation Grants available at MTSU again

After a four-year absence of available funding, Innovation Grants are available again to help educators obtain resources for creating instructional innovations.

To foster innovation in technology-enhanced learning, the Instructional Technologies Development Committee is now accepting proposals for ITD Instructional Technologies Innovation grants.

This annual grant is designed to support projects related to the exploration of new technologies and/or the innovative and effective integration of existing technologies into teaching and learning—projects that can demonstrate improved and more effective course instruction in meeting instructional objectives with technology, thus supporting student success.

Funding may be used for hardware, software, and/or other essential resources, as well as faculty stipends.

Applications will be accepted from full-time tenure/tenure-track teaching faculty or faculty groups, and multi-disciplinary faculty teams are encouraged. Proposals must include an original and thorough description of the project; a statement of objectives; a discussion of potential benefits of the project to faculty member(s), students, and the University; a plan for assessing improved learning outcomes; and an itemized budget detailing the total funding request.

Applicants MUST consult with a member of the ITD Faculty Instructional Technology Center (FITC) staff prior to submitting a proposal to review the budget requests and confirm that needed infrastructure to accomplish the project is available or included in the budget.

See Innovation Grants for complete details. Please direct any questions to the Faculty Instructional Technology Center at 615-904-8189 or itdacad@mtsu.edu.

Barbara Draude, ITD assistant vice president of Academic and Instructional Technologies, said the grant is intended for faculty members to “demonstrate creativity, innovation, or a promising transformation of existing methods by integrating technology into the teaching/learning environment.”

“The proposal should provide evidence of the level of innovation, be it at the departmental, University, regional, national, and/or discipline levels,” Draude said. The award will “expand and improve instructor/student skills and knowledge related to the use of technology in learning.”

In 2013, the last year it was offered, Music Associate Professor Jennifer Vannatta-Hall received a grant to use for a classroom set of iPads to facilitate teaching and learning in a secondary general music methods course.

The objectives of the project were for Vocal/General Music Education majors to use the Apple iPad to:

- engage in music-making opportunities.
- develop an understanding of music theory.
- listen to, analyze and describe music.
- improvise and compose music.
- plan and teach secondary general music lessons.

“I wanted to train our future music teachers to use technology as an instructional aid and assessment tool for their future students in the music classroom,” Vanatta-Hall said. “This grant helped me achieve the purpose and objectives…. The students gained experience using the iPad as an instructional and assessment tool. They explored music applications and designed music lessons that incorporated the apps.”

She encouraged faculty to take advantage of the grant now that it is available again.

“Technology can be expensive, and the ITD (grant) not only makes funds available for larger projects, but they also provide the support to install technology and follow up,” she said. “The ITD staff was very helpful in writing the grant application. I met with a staff person a couple of times before I submitted, which helped to make my application stronger.”
New ITD workshop calendar streamlines registration process

Taking or teaching an ITD workshop requires much less work than ever, thanks to a recent upgrade to the look and performance of the website.

“The new one is brand new from the ground up, and our main approach was to include all the features of the old one with a heavy focus on user experience, both from the perspective of the end user (someone who is signing up for a workshop) plus the administrators,” said David J. Stevenson, ITD specialist-web developer, who headed up the recent upgrade along with Alecia Heidt, specialist-web designer.

The original system—which was nearing 20 years old—had been maintained and improved to the maximum extent possible without the much-needed updates directly to the database, Stevenson said.

Some of the new features include:
- individual user access to view classes
- several administrative access levels
- custom workshop webpages available for each department.

For example ITD’s at mtsu.edu/itd/workshops/calendar vs. its general one at mtsu.edu/workshops/calendar.

- automatic reminder emails and ability to email class roster if someone changes/cancels

One of the goals of the improvement project is to eventually allow users to obtain digital Continuing Education “badges” for their resumes or CVs, to show what training they have received through workshops.

“It initially started from a conversation about ‘badging,’” Stevenson said. “Barbara Draude (ITD assistant vice president) asked if we could build a system that would track what workshops folks were taking, so that taking a certain set could allow them to earn a badge, and that they could display those badges for continuing education.”

“That part isn’t done yet. However, the groundwork has been laid with new features, like individual users being able to log in and see all of the classes they’ve attended with the new system, so that it shouldn’t be too wacky to implement,” Stevenson added.

Draude said the improvements, completed at the start of the fall semester, have made the process so much easier for those teaching courses and those taking part.

“Building on the work done by previous programmers, David revised the workshop registration system to streamline the processes to enter workshop information, for members of the faculty and staff to register, for the workshop instructors to obtain rosters and document attendance, and for attendees to retrieve verification of workshop attendance,” Draude said.

“The new system makes the management of ITD workshops and other campus workshops much easier,” she said.
Munson has helped create “sharing” environment at MTSU

When looking back over Dave Munson’s 17 years with ITD, there is a one-word theme that comes to mind: sharing.

That includes engineering shared campus-wide databases for work orders and workshops, sharing his tech knowledge through the ITD Help Desk, or helping employees campus-wide share with others in need during the holidays.

Munson grew up in the Detroit area and graduated from the University of Michigan with bachelor’s and master’s degrees in engineering. In 1998, he moved south with his wife, Laurie, as her company merged with Ingram Content Group and relocated to the Nashville area.

Two years later, Munson started working for ITD as a systems analyst. In 2000, several ITD services were offered through desktop applications, including the work-order and workshop signup programs. Working with others in ITD, all that was incorporated into one online database network, Munson said, and tech support was consolidated into the ITD Help Desk.

“We had things like spreadsheets or dedicated desktop kind of database, not a network kind of thing, and I put it together into a web-based database with interfaces so they could be accessible by anyone in ITD,” he said.

About seven years ago he became involved in a similar consolidation effort to simplify the process of making payroll deductions for local charitable and service organizations, now called the Employee Charitable Giving Campaign. It started with a phone call from Tom Wallace, associate vice president, IT projects and portfolio management.

“Tom called me and Gary Redmon (Systems Administrator 2) in and asked if we could develop an online giving system for the charitable giving campaign,” Munson said. “Gary designed and developed the authentication portion and maintains that for us. I developed the input form and manage the data, which involves working with the committee to help people with any issues they run into, as well as create reports for the committee.”

The project was somewhat of a Christmas season miracle, Munson recalls.

“Tom brought Gary and me in, and we had a whole two weeks to work with. Tom asked, ‘Do you think you can do it?’ And I told him, ‘No, not in a whole two weeks.’ But I told him we’d do the best we can and give it a try,” Munson said. “Turns out two weeks and I think two days, we were there. And the system was born.”

A recent addition was the “thermometer” on digital signage around campus updating the progress of the campaign.

“We had a literal thermometer that moved around campus, then we had one that exists on the webpage that got added a year after we started, and now we’re using digital signage,” Munson said.

He enjoys the tag-team type working relationship with Curt Curry, ITD systems analyst 2.

“Curt and I team up and support each other in projects,” he said.

Munson said those types of collaborative projects are what he has enjoyed most about working in ITD.

“ITD has always been a very cohesive group. People help people in other parts take care of the business they need to take care of,” Munson said. “Curt and I . . . have helped troubleshoot things and fill in on the Help Desk, when requested.

“Now things are so specialized—we can help with general kinds of questions,” he added.

Away from work, Munson is a serious coin collector and he and his wife are involved in World Outreach Church. That includes teaching Financial Peace University—a Dave Ramsey course that helps people with money management.

The couple has adopted two rescued cats.
MTSU grad Smith is ITD’s new learning multimedia developer

Kourtney Smith joined ITD in October as a learning multimedia developer.

Smith, of Cookeville, Tennessee, earned a Bachelor of Science in Electronic Media Production and a Bachelor of Arts in English from MTSU in 2012. She also received a Master of Science in Mass Communication Media and Entertainment in 2015, also from MTSU.

She began her career in television news production at the WTVF NewsChannel 5 Network in Nashville.

“A summer internship during my junior year of college led me to NC5, and after I graduated in 2012, I spent my first 2½ years as a technical operator in news production,” she said. “More recently I was a producer/director for our cable channel, NewsChannel5+, directing and producing live and live-to-tape local content.”

She said coming back to MTSU “was like coming back home.” As a student she worked on MTSU's live production truck and EMC Productions as a graphics producer for live ESPN3 sporting events and entertainment such as the first Capitol Records Street Party.

After working with MT Housing and Residential Life as a Learning Community Advisor in a First-Year Experience dorm providing tutoring in English and algebra for freshman students, she was named to the Housing Hall of Fame.

Smith interned with the News and Media Relations department as a contributing writer for MTSU Magazine and helped with the production of Out of the Blue.

“While working on my master’s degree, I worked as a graduate teaching assistant for three semesters, and was a temporary support secretary for the English Department for a few months,” she said.

Her husband, Dustin Smith, works at MTSU as a technical specialist for the Student Union Building.

“We are MTSU sweethearts who met in our first freshman class, University 1010. MTSU has been a huge part of the wonderful story God has been writing for us, both professionally and personally. I’m so happy to be home,” she said.

Away from work, they love spending time with their dog Lyla, their families, and on DIY projects.

“I’m really a grandma at heart—I love to bake, crochet, read, and binge-watch sitcoms,” she said.

“My wonderful friends at NC5’s Talk of the Town had me on the show as a guest cook for a couple of episodes, which was a lot of fun!”

Networking at Faculty Fair

MTSU faculty and staff talk instructional tech at the Fall Faculty Fair held Oct. 25. You don’t have to wait until this annual event to get support for classroom innovation ideas. LT&ITC staff members are available for consultation on topics like faculty development, individual teaching practices, and course and instructional design support. Get more information at mtsu.edu/ltanditc/index.php.

MTSU hosts annual tech Summit

The Tennessee Summit on Administrative Computing Technologies was held Oct. 15–17 at MTSU.

Sponsored by the Tennessee Board of Regents, the annual event brought together nearly 440 higher education professionals in Tennessee and surrounding states who have adopted Banner from Ellucian.

It is a forum for networking on the administrative technology needs of higher education institutions.

Titled “Charge and Recharge,” this year’s event featured a keynote address by Namita Dhallan, senior vice president and chief product officer for Ellucian, and a presentation by Jared Marber, director of sales for Blackboard Transact.

Taking part from MTSU ITD were Lisa Rogers, James Foster, John Patterson, JoAnn Batson, Charlotte Caruthers, Ying Ding, Eve Jones, Phyllis Kitzler, Ryan Lau, Janae Peterson, Sandy Petty, Yen Qualls, Gary Redmon, Valerie Rossman, Theresa Stevenson, Debbie Warren, Tim Taylor, Aaron Schmuhl, Michael Barton, and Chad Mullis.
Put these accessibility tools on gift list year-round

What technologies are out there that can make a difference for people with disabilities? The products listed below can be used in any campus environment to enhance access to events and information.

For people with a hearing impairment, a basic room microphone might be enough to boost spoken audio to intelligible levels. Truly, a room microphone is a benefit for all people, and that is a point I love about many technologies for people with disabilities. If the room microphone is not enough, the person with a hearing disability may need a mic system that can broadcast to his/her hearing aids, such as the Roger mic by Phonak. You’ll also want to make sure that any videos presented have captions and any recorded audio has a transcript.

People with a vision impairment can vary widely in their ability to see and interact with materials. A person with color blindness may just need you to avoid certain color combinations when you’re creating presentations or handouts. These color combinations are determined by the type of color blindness that the individual has.

For people that are legally blind but still have some vision, large print (18 point font or higher) that has a high color contrast might suit the need. If your area incorporates desktops or laptops, you may need third-party software for screen magnification and/or text-to-speech synthesis. A quality product for both Mac and PC that performs both functions is ZoomText, but the person might be able to get enough assistance from the accessibility functions that come pre-installed on both Macs and PCs.

People who are blind will need a few more learning supports in your space. The first consideration is speaking anything that is presented visually. This applies to information presented in videos, as well as live presentations. Another way to provide equal access is installing screen-reading technologies, like JAWS or VoiceOver, which are available through the Disability and Access Center’s (DAC) software site license.

People with a mobility impairment can vary even more widely, depending on the nature of the disability. However, a popular accommodation for mobility impairment is speech recognition, and both Macs and PCs have this built into their latest operating systems. Cortana in Windows is a virtual assistant that can aid people in a variety of tasks, and Siri on the Mac can do a similar set of functions.

Text prediction is another software feature that can aid people that are non-verbal. This function is present in a wide array of devices and softwares, but Texthelp’s Read&Write is known for its focus on making this tool streamlined and powerful.

Speaking of Read&Write, the other tools in this software suite are tailored to aid people with learning disabilities. Some of the benefits of the Read&Write software are:

- improving reading comprehension: hear webpages and documents read aloud with a choice of natural voices
- helping people understand unfamiliar words with text and picture dictionaries
- developing writing skills and confidence with word prediction
- supporting homework and independent research with study skills tools
- turning documents and web pages into MP3 files for easy listening on the move
- assisting English Language Learners and people studying a second language
- providing accessibility features like screen masking that give extra support to people with dyslexia and other literacy challenges

Kurzweil 3000 is a competitor to Read&Write and has a set of tools that almost mirror the latter. Both Kurzweil and Read&Write are available through DAC’s software site license.

Hopefully this brief overview of technologies for people with disabilities gives you some ideas of ways that you can provide better campus access through technology to people with disabilities. The goal is to “level the playing field” so that no person is at a disadvantage.

Follow the hyperlinks provided in this article to find out more about any particular assistive technology, and feel free to email me at William.Burgess@mtsu.edu with any specific questions about their implementation.

None of the solutions mentioned are the single answer, but together, they create a platform on which learners of today and tomorrow will shape the world.
Email ‘conversation view’ is a great tool for organizing inbox

Emails are just a part of life. You can either hate them or love them, but you are going to have to deal with them. So why not use the conversation view?

It is available in most email clients, whether that email client is Microsoft Outlook 2016—which comes installed on MTSU computers—or one installed on your own personal cellphone such as Mail on my Galaxy S8+.

Basically, this view makes it easier to deal with those emails. Instead of having related emails scattered all over the place where you have to hunt through all of them, it gathers them all up for you. It does this by looking for emails that have the same email subject line.

Then it shows them to you in an easy-to-follow view regardless of where they are stored in your email client.

For instance, if you look at top right you can see a recent email conversation between Communicator Editor Craig Myers and me, Joshua Love.

It shows the email in which Craig asks me to submit a Tech Tips for this issue of Communicator, and it shows my response to him that is stored in the Sent Items folder in Outlook. Then it shows his reply to that response.

Therefore, there is no longer a need for me to have hunt down each of these individual emails anymore to get an idea of what our email exchange was about.

I can now clearly see it from the start of the exchange to the end result you are reading now.

IT Tips & Tricks

Important steps for obtaining Guest user account from ITD

Guests are always welcome at MTSU.

But any guest presenter/lecturer who plans to use a University computer or system should follow some important steps to obtain a Guest user account.

The ITD Help Desk should be the first point of contact at 615-898-5345 or help@mtsu.edu.

The responsible person should submit the following details:

- What is the name of the event the accounts will be associated with, if applicable?
- When will the accounts be needed?
- How many accounts are needed?
- How long will the Guest accounts be used?
- Who is our point of contact regarding these accounts?
- What are the rooms in which the Guest accounts will be used?

• Will the guests be staying on campus? (This request will require ResNet access as well and must often be coordinated with Housing Administration.)

Once a request has been submitted to the Help Desk, it will take a minimum of one business day to process. If the request is submitted on a Friday, the account will be available no earlier than Monday.

Therefore, if accounts are needed for a weekend event, the request should be submitted no later than mid-day that Thursday.

Guest accounts are governed by University Policy 910 (Information Technology Resources). Failure to comply with this policy can put University resources, students, and staff at risk.

A presenter using their own equipment will likely NOT need a guest account. Exceptions to this would be if the presenter needs to access University resources, such as file shares.