WELCOME TO THE FALL 2014 SEMESTER!

I hope you and your family enjoyed a wonderful summer and I look forward to working with you in 2014–2015.

The beginning of each semester is a good time to reflect on recent accomplishments at MTSU and to look ahead to the many opportunities in our future. I trust you continue to find this newsletter informative and useful. I also welcome your feedback! Please send comments to Sidney.McPhee@mtsu.edu. I invite you to check out “The President’s Post” at www.mtsu.edu/President for updates and information from my office, or look for them on the MTSU home page. You can also follow me on Twitter: @PresidentMcPhee.

Thank you for all you do to support the goals and objectives of this great university.

True Blue!

OUR NEW CATALYST

I could not be more proud to announce that on October 15 we will officially open our new $147-million Science Building.

As anyone familiar with science-related programs and infrastructure at MTSU will attest, the new building is as desperately needed as it is long overdue. And yet, when viewed in the greater context of other changes at MTSU and in Tennessee and beyond—from an evolving University mission to shifting funding formulas to exploding scientific frontiers—the timing actually couldn’t be better.

This project was the number-one priority of the University even before I got here 13 years ago. Since MTSU has the state’s largest undergraduate student population, the new Science Building is critical to our continuing efforts to provide Tennessee with graduates ready to succeed in today’s workforce. About 80 percent of all MTSU students will take classes in this new building.

Now in operation, the building is already helping MTSU create more science graduates to fill high-tech jobs, prepare

continued on page 2

ADMISSIONS

We continue to work extremely hard to ensure that our new and existing students get the attention they need and deserve to make attending MTSU a great experience and to see a clear path to graduation. To that end, we recently announced major changes in regard to future scholarship opportunities.

• For prospective students who meet the application requirements and deadlines, five major scholarships will be guaranteed.

continued on page 3

I AM true BLUE.
Our New Catalyst

continued from page 1

more teachers for math and science in K–12 schools, and enhance the economy of our state and region. It immediately makes MTSU more competitive for research projects, science scholarship, and entrepreneurial efforts.

MTSU’s enrollment has almost quadrupled in the last 45 years but with no increased space for science education until now. Wiser-Patten Science Hall and Davis Science Building were built in 1932 and 1967, respectively, and have a combined total of only about 75,000 net square feet. The new Science Building has more than 250,000 gross square feet of classrooms, faculty and student research laboratories, and collaborative learning spaces. Rest assured, those two older buildings that hold memories for generations of graduates now working in science fields or those who simply took science courses as undergraduates will be put to good use. They are scheduled for significant renovations that will completely revitalize them. Renovation schedules call for them to reopen by summer 2016. About $20 million will be spent to get the job done.

Primary benefactors will be the Physics and Astronomy Department, which will take over much of Wiser-Patten Hall. The Davis Building will house the Geosciences Department, which recently moved from the College of Liberal Arts to the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. Geosciences’ departure from Kirksey Old Main will open space in MTSU’s oldest and most beloved building for expansion of the Computer Science Department.

The Davis Building will also become home to centers that need additional space, including the Center for Cedar Glade Science and the Center for Environmental Education. Eighteen new student advisors working for the College of Basic and Applied Sciences will also be in Davis. Additional space in new student advisors working for the College of Basic and Studies and the Center for Environmental Education. Eighteen need additional space, including the Center for Cedar Glade Science Department.

and most beloved building for expansion of the Computer Science Department.

MTSU’s enrollment has almost quadrupled in the last 45 years but with no increased space for science education until now. Wiser-Patten Science Hall and Davis Science Building were built in 1932 and 1967, respectively, and have a combined total of only about 75,000 net square feet. The new Science Building has more than 250,000 gross square feet of classrooms, faculty and student research laboratories, and collaborative learning spaces. Rest assured, those two older buildings that hold memories for generations of graduates now working in science fields or those who simply took science courses as undergraduates will be put to good use. They are scheduled for significant renovations that will completely revitalize them. Renovation schedules call for them to reopen by summer 2016. About $20 million will be spent to get the job done.

Primary benefactors will be the Physics and Astronomy Department, which will take over much of Wiser-Patten Hall. The Davis Building will house the Geosciences Department, which recently moved from the College of Liberal Arts to the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. Geosciences’ departure from Kirksey Old Main will open space in MTSU’s oldest and most beloved building for expansion of the Computer Science Department.

The Davis Building will also become home to centers that need additional space, including the Center for Cedar Glade Science and the Center for Environmental Education. Eighteen new student advisors working for the College of Basic and Applied Sciences will also be in Davis. Additional space in the building will be used for research labs or future growth. These are just a few of the planned moves.

Consistent with our rich tradition of teacher training, the new Science Building is tailor-made for the science of education, designed to make learning and teaching a more productive and compelling experience. It follows ideas put forward by the nation’s foremost science and technology experts with regard to what works best for effective science and science education teaching. It includes discovery-based group-learn ing environments and spaces for informal discussion and collaborative interaction, all vital for establishing and promoting an ultramodern science education and research community.

Speaking of research, space in the new building will meet MTSU’s needs for many decades. Two upgrades will be particularly transformative. For the first time, MTSU now has a facility for conducting animal research. On the chemistry side, modern fume hoods now allow experiments that were long prohibited in our older buildings. As a result, the new building strengthens MTSU’s ability to pursue a solid, focused research agenda, and it significantly raises the University’s profile as a research institution.

MTSU grants about 700 degrees in biology, chemistry, and related fields each year. Now that the new Science Building is in operation, that number could increase by 25 percent.

MTSU’s new Science Building will be the portal through which we enter a new realm of science and research activity and compete for its rewards.

Has it been a long time coming? Definitely. But now that the science and research fettters have been broken, it’s time to get to work.

There’s a lot of science to be done!

Admissions

continued from page 1

Academic Service (from 27 to 26), Provost (from 26 to 25), and valedictorian/salutatorian (from 23 to 22). The required high school GPA remains 3.5. Guaranteed scholarship amounts range from $2,000 to $6,000 per year.

• Each scholarship requires students to work 75 hours during the semester or five hours per week in a department affiliated with their major.

• In addition, the University’s Transfer Academic Scholarships will switch from competitive-based to guaranteed for qualifying students transferring from any of the state’s 13 community colleges. Guaranteed scholarships for transfer students with 45–105 earned hours, 3.0 GPAs for community college transfers or 3.5 GPAs for transfers from four-year institutions is a game changer. It shows our institutional commitment to transfer students, and the changes coincide with the 2015 launch of Gov. Bill Haslam’s Tennessee Promise scholarship, which provides free tuition at community colleges for state residents as part of the effort to increase the number of Tennesseans with college degrees or certifications. We anticipate that the outcome of Tennessee Promise will be more students with associate degrees transferring to MTSU beginning in fall 2017.

MTSU hopes to boost recruitment of incoming freshmen and transfer students with these new scholarship eligibility requirements, which should ease the burden of rising tuition. These adjustments will allow us to offer more guaranteed scholarships to highly qualified students earlier in the recruiting cycle. Faculty members are our best ambassadors and recruiters, so please encourage students in your sphere of influence who have at least 3.5 high school GPAs and at least a 25 on the ACT to apply soon to be a part of the MTSU class of 2019.

Here are more news items and notes about admissions efforts:

• Faculty members know quite well what a great value MTSU is, and they are aware of the excellent care and instruction our students receive. I want to remind all MTSU faculty (and staff) that their own children need look no further than MTSU to find the best higher education in the state—and receive a 50 percent tuition discount!

• We have admitted fewer students through committee review, shaping the freshman class into the most academically prepared class in years.

• Last year, campus tours for prospective students increased 11.4 percent, special tours increased 16.25 percent, and preview days saw a 92.9 percent increase among prospective students.

In just a few weeks, the deans and I will join our Admissions recruiting staff on the road to travel Tennessee and meet with prospective students and their families and with high school guidance counselors. Here are the Fall True Blue Tour reception dates and sites:

Sept. 17: Chattanoogas Convention Center, 1 Carter Plaza, Chattanooga

Sept. 22: The Millennium Centre, 2001 Millennium Place, Johnson City

Sept. 23: The Foundry on the Fair Site, 747 World’s Fair Park Drive, Knoxville

Sept. 30: Rocketown, 601 4th Ave. South, Nashville

Oct. 22: Memphis Botanic Gardens, 750 Cherry Road, Memphis

Oct. 23: Jackson Country Club, 31 Jackson Country Club Drive, Jackson

True Blue Tour
Continuing the Quest
My focus every single day is to shepherd University-wide efforts to improve student retention and to provide continuous support to keep them enrolled and on track to graduation. From the retooling of classes too many students have failed to the recent opening of a new $16 million Student Services and Admissions Center and MT One Stop, examples abound of our collective focus on student success.

This emphasis on retention and graduation is not code for grade inflation. It’s the right thing to do. And it’s also perfectly aligned with the goals of the Tennessee General Assembly and governor’s office. As faculty and staff members at MTSU, I know you are on board with this emphasis. I have told you on several occasions that if students become an interruption in your day, you’re in the wrong business!

With the crucial help and development of Dr. Brad Bartel, our provost, MTSU launched its Quest for Student Success initiative in October 2013, creating extensive reforms aimed at helping students stay on track academically and complete their degrees. The University’s goal is to boost its current 52 percent graduation rate to at least 62 percent by 2020.

The Quest for Student Success concentrates on

• stepping up recruitment of students with greater potential to succeed at a four-year comprehensive university;
• enhancing the academic experience to better ensure student success, including on-campus and online tutoring, more advising, and an emphasis on more high-tech and high-touch approaches; and
• using more innovative, proven techniques to help students flourish.

For more information about MTSU’s Quest for Student Success, go to www.mtsu.edu/studentsuccess. In this quest, we are guided—even, even—by 10 points that I first introduced in our town hall sessions last semester. For those of you who are new to MTSU and as a refresher for us all, I want to touch upon them once more.

www.mtsu.edu/studentsuccess

• Student success is born and nurtured in the classroom. It is in the classroom that ideas are shared, critical thinking is introduced, and lifelong learning is encouraged. It is through instruction, in its many forms, that our students are stretched, equipped, and inspired. All else that happens on this campus, and I mean everything, happens in support of that process.

• The results will take time, but we cannot afford to take our time. There is no silver bullet that will transform our retention rates in the next few days. Our success will happen over time, not overnight. That being said, we cannot allow ourselves to somehow dismiss the urgency of the moment. We must be fully committed to perform every function, take advantage of every opportunity, and be accountable for every responsibility so that student success becomes a reality, not just a rallying cry.

• We will customize what worked elsewhere and shape it to fit our context. Other institutions have developed best practices that we have identified for our use. We must take advantage of the latest and most effective technologies and approaches. But we do not need to reinvent the wheel. And we will not attempt to merely apply cookie-cutter strategies gleaned from others.

• Our decisions are data-informed and not necessarily data-driven. We choose to use data to move forward, to upgrade and expand. But not to restrict, reduce, or place blame. In short, data helps make better decisions but it does not pigeonhole our decision making.

• We will employ both high-tech and high-touch strategies to maximize our reach. We will identify how we can better equip our faculty, staff, and administrators. Investments in new systems such as the EAB Education Advisory Board software are key to moving the needle of our success. Yet, while technology can boost our efficiency, nothing takes the place of genuine relationships that faculty and advisors have with students. We will not forfeit the human touch in favor of high tech.

• To maximize our momentum and synergy, we are developing connective projects. We cannot be a random collection of good intentions on the part of various entities, but rather we must act in ways that are intentional and coordinated as a united educational community.

• We are proud of the students we have and are committed to serving them. While we continue to build on our history of steadily increasing academic rigor, we will stay focused on our current students to help them reach their academic goals and potential as they move toward graduation. Beyond retention rates and funding formulas, serving the students we admit is our moral obligation.

• Our Quest for Student Success includes all, involves all, and invites all. No single person or college is responsible for student success. What we will accomplish will be through all of us working together creatively and collaboratively. We are all in this boat together and must depend on each other to row in the same direction and at the same pace.

• Our most effective initiatives will affect the majority of our students. Every student is unique, yet our research shows that most face the same or similar challenges. By developing programs that speak to most students, we better the most for success. For that reason, we have placed great importance on enhancing advising and tutoring and developing a sophomore experience akin to our existing freshman experience. Our new MT One Stop is another example of how we are providing better service for the greater number of our students.

• Lastly, in terms of success, to have something else we must do something else. Higher education has a reputation for maintaining the status quo while the world changes around it. That approach is no longer sustainable; and both two-year and four-year institutions are getting the message. It is no longer acceptable to continue to go down the same road while saying we want to wind up somewhere else. It has been said that “the times set the agenda,” and we are, with clarity, moving forward with new ideas and fresh energy.

www.mtsu.edu/studentsuccess

To maximize our momentum and synergy, we are developing connective projects. We cannot be a random collection of good intentions on the part of various entities, but rather we must act in ways that are intentional and coordinated as a united educational community.

We are proud of the students we have and are committed to serving them. While we continue to build on our history of steadily increasing academic rigor, we will stay focused on our current students to help them reach their academic goals and potential as they move toward graduation. Beyond retention rates and funding formulas, serving the students we admit is our moral obligation.

Our Quest for Student Success includes all, involves all, and invites all. No single person or college is responsible for student success. What we will accomplish will be through all of us working together creatively and collaboratively. We are all in this boat together and must depend on each other to row in the same direction and at the same pace.

Our most effective initiatives will affect the majority of our students. Every student is unique, yet our research shows that most face the same or similar challenges. By developing programs that speak to most students, we better the most for success. For that reason, we have placed great importance on enhancing advising and tutoring and developing a sophomore experience akin to our existing freshman experience. Our new MT One Stop is another example of how we are providing better service for the greater number of our students.

Lastly, in terms of success, to have something else we must do something else. Higher education has a reputation for maintaining the status quo while the world changes around it. That approach is no longer sustainable; and both two-year and four-year institutions are getting the message. It is no longer acceptable to continue to go down the same road while saying we want to wind up somewhere else. It has been said that “the times set the agenda,” and we are, with clarity, moving forward with new ideas and fresh energy.

www.mtsu.edu/studentsuccess

It is important to note that these new ideas do not include watering down academic programs or relaxing rigor. We have a moral imperative to not only enhance the present academic experience but to also continue to add value to the degrees already obtained by our alumni. Thus, we are not lowering the bar; we are—in many instances—raising the standard for all of us, including students.

There are many other examples of our commitment to the Quest for Student Success at MTSU. Here are a few more!

A Dedicated Leader. The plan to successfully pursue this quest included establishing a new vice provost position to provide leadership, vision, and strategic planning in support of student retention and success. The job is particularly focused on creating a learning environment where high expectations for student learning are linked to an effective system of academic support initiatives.

Just last month, MTSU welcomed Dr. Richard “Rick” Sluder as the new vice provost for student success. He assumes his new role on Sept. 15. Dr. Sluder comes to MTSU after serving as vice provost for recruitment and outreach at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg. He helped UCM increase its enrollment and led its initiative to improve student retention and graduation rates. At UCM, he was also part of an effort to establish an Office of Military and Veterans Services to accommodate student veterans, and he worked to strengthen UCM partnerships with community colleges. Similar efforts have been high priorities at MTSU. Dr. Sluder will have a singular focus at MTSU: ensuring the academic success of the University’s students.

Advising Initiative. A far-reaching initiative that shows conclusively that even in a tight budget environment we are committed to student success is our hiring of approximately 50 new advisors. These advisors will be housed in individual colleges and will have access to cutting-edge software designed to help shepherd students through their academic endeavors. Having these new advisors...
**Good Exchange**

Presenting a banner to Mia Jianhua, second from right, director of the Guangxi Botanical Garden.

MTSU signed an agreement to extend its research partnership in China with the world’s largest medicinal herb garden through 2023. The pact with the Guangxi Botanical Garden of Medicinal Plants also secures MTSU’s worldwide rights, excluding China, to patent and market products developed in the partnership. The partners agreed to a 50-50 split of any profits from the collaboration. It extends an exclusive agreement that began in 2011 to accelerate the development of Western medicines from plant extracts. An analysis of 52 extracts recently provided by the garden identified 29 with promising results, including 12 with anti-cancer potential; eight with anti-inflammatory potential; and one that may be useful in the treatment of diabetes. This set of 52 extracts is in addition to almost 40 results identified last year that show promise in the treatment of cancer, viral infections, and other ailments.

In addition, a year-old partnership between MTSU and Guangxi University will enable 140 students from the south China institution to eventually come to Murfreesboro to study. Fifty-three (53) students will eventually enroll at MTSU to study finance in the Jennings A. Jones College of Business, and 34 will study business administration in Jones College. Forty-six (46) will study mathematics in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. This means that our partnership with Guangxi University has become one of our most productive and successful in less than a year.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is giving them the opportunity to perform a comprehensive study that could change the way health professions treat these patients. With a $388,894 grant from the federal agency, Drs. Don Morgan and Sandy Stevens will recruit, test, and follow up with clients suitable for treatment in MTSU’s underwater treadmill laboratory beginning this fall. Thirty participants, including some in a control group, will help the scientists determine the impact of underwater treadmill training on partially paralyzed individuals’ mobility, health, and quality of life. Part of the NIH funding will pay undergraduate and graduate students for assisting with the study. It’s a move that will better prepare MTSU graduates for jobs in the health professions and improve the University’s research profile. The NIH-funded study is noteworthy for a university not connected to MTSU’s underwater treadmill lab.

**Not So Run of the Mill**

For three years, MTSU’s exercise science experts have worked wonders with people who suffer from certain spinal cord injuries. Now, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is giving them the opportunity to perform a comprehensive study that could change the way health professions treat these patients. With a $388,894 grant from the federal agency, Drs. Don Morgan and Sandy Stevens will recruit, test, and follow up with clients suitable for treatment in MTSU’s underwater treadmill laboratory beginning this fall. Thirty participants, including some in a control group, will help the scientists determine the impact of underwater treadmill training on partially paralyzed individuals’ mobility, health, and quality of life. Part of the NIH funding will pay undergraduate and graduate students for assisting with the study. It’s a move that will better prepare MTSU graduates for jobs in the health professions and improve the University’s research profile. The NIH-funded study is noteworthy for a university not connected to a college of medicine or a teaching hospital.

**Mass Appeal**

Three former MTSU students were nominated for Grammys this year, and one was a Grammy winner. Michael Knox produced Jason Aldean’s “Night Train,” which was in the running for Best Country Album. Jessi Alexander cowrote two Best Country Song nominations: Lee Brice’s “I Drive Your Truck” and Blake Shelton’s “Mine Would Be You.” Luke Laird coproduced the Kacey Musgraves album “Same Trailer, Different Park,” which won Best Country Album. Laird also cowrote many of the tracks. More than a dozen MTSU alumni/former students and faculty have been nominated for Grammy Awards in the last three years, and seven have been winners.

**Print on Demand**

BLUE print Solutions, the University’s first retail printing center, located on the first floor of the Student Union, continues growing and meeting the needs of the University community, especially in aiding students in their quest for success. The name is quite intentional: the printing center will do more than simply fulfill customer orders. The idea is to also provide creative solutions for a variety of graphic arts projects.

I am quite pleased with the efforts of BLUE print Solutions to meet and exceed the needs of its customers, including my office. Much like its commercial counterparts, BLUE print Solutions offers an array of auxiliary services includ-

**BLU Print Solutions employees have given them.** BLUE print Solutions is focused on meeting the needs of students first, but it also serves faculty, staff, and the administration. It is also open to alumni and the general public.

Students have expressed their happiness with the help BLUE print Solutions employees have given them. BLUE print Solutions is focused on meeting the needs of students first, but it also serves faculty, staff, and the administration. It is also open to alumni and the general public.

**The state-of-the-art facility is committed to looking for more ways to enhance the learning experience at MTSU. I can assure you that BLUE print Solutions stands ready to serve.**

**Print on Demand**

BLUE print Solutions, the University’s first retail printing center, located on the first floor of the Student Union, continues growing and meeting the needs of the University community, especially in aiding students in their quest for success. The name is quite intentional: the printing center will do more than simply fulfill customer orders. The idea is to also provide creative solutions for a variety of graphic arts projects.

I am quite pleased with the efforts of BLUE print Solutions to meet and exceed the needs of its customers, including my office. Much like its commercial counterparts, BLUE print Solutions offers an array of auxiliary services includ-

**BLU Print Solutions employees have given them.** BLUE print Solutions is focused on meeting the needs of students first, but it also serves faculty, staff, and the administration. It is also open to alumni and the general public.

Students have expressed their happiness with the help BLUE print Solutions employees have given them. BLUE print Solutions is focused on meeting the needs of students first, but it also serves faculty, staff, and the administration. It is also open to alumni and the general public.

**The state-of-the-art facility is committed to looking for more ways to enhance the learning experience at MTSU. I can assure you that BLUE print Solutions stands ready to serve.**

**Print on Demand**

BLUE print Solutions, the University’s first retail printing center, located on the first floor of the Student Union, continues growing and meeting the needs of the University community, especially in aiding students in their quest for success. The name is quite intentional: the printing center will do more than simply fulfill customer orders. The idea is to also provide creative solutions for a variety of graphic arts projects.

I am quite pleased with the efforts of BLUE print Solutions to meet and exceed the needs of its customers, including my office. Much like its commercial counterparts, BLUE print Solutions offers an array of auxiliary services includ-

**BLU Print Solutions employees have given them.** BLUE print Solutions is focused on meeting the needs of students first, but it also serves faculty, staff, and the administration. It is also open to alumni and the general public.

Students have expressed their happiness with the help BLUE print Solutions employees have given them. BLUE print Solutions is focused on meeting the needs of students first, but it also serves faculty, staff, and the administration. It is also open to alumni and the general public.
MTSU had an exciting and productive year during its first season of Conference USA action. The Blue Raiders won three championships, sent four teams to postseason play, and had 11 student-athletes advance to NCAA Championships. In the classroom, 139 student-athletes were on the Commissioner’s List and 11 were named to various C-USA All-Academic teams.

Here are some selected highlights from the year that was in MT athletics:

During the spring 2014 semester, 9 of 17 teams had APRs of 9.0 or higher; 101 student-athletes made the Dean’s List (3.5+ GPA), and 37 had a perfect 4.0. Overall, 193 of 340 student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher (57%).

For the fifth consecutive year, all 17 of Middle Tennessee’s athletic teams earned a multiyear Academic Progress Rate (APR) of over 930 when the NCAA released its annual report in June. For the sixth time in the last seven years, Middle Tennessee football’s athletic teams finished 24th nationally, and Eliud Rutto and Cordairo Golden earned All-American honors.

In July, Conference USA released its annual report in June. For the sixth time in the last seven years, Middle Tennessee football’s athletic teams finished 24th nationally, and Eliud Rutto and Cordairo Golden earned All-American honors.

Middle Tennessee junior Tiffany William was selected as the 2014 Conference USA Women’s Tennis Newcomer of the Year. The London, England, native is the first Blue Raider to win a C-USA Newcomer of the Year award.

The 2014 class of the Blue Raider Sports Hall of Fame features basketball standout Kerry Hammond Sr., track star Micah Otis, trailblazers Jennifer Martinez (football) and James Griffin (football), and bead coach Larry Joe Inman (women’s basketball). The official induction ceremony will be held before the Oct. 4 football game against Southern Miss.

Middle Tennessee head track and field coach Dean Hayes received the Fred Russell Lifetime Achievement Award at the 16th Annual Pepsi Dinner of Champions in February.

Middle Tennessee senior left-handed pitcher Zac Curtis was selected in the sixth round, 180th overall, by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the 2014 Major League Baseball Draft on June 6.

Senior Shawn Jones of the Middle Tennessee basketball team was named 2013-14 Conference USA Men’s Basketball Player of the Year, and Ebony Rowe was named C-USA Women’s Basketball Player of the Year. For the first time in school history, the Blue Raiders won Player of the Year for both the men’s and women’s teams.

In May, the Middle Tennessee Athletic Communications Office was named one of the “Super 11” by the Football Writers Association of America (FWAA). The award went to the best sports information departments in the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision for the 2013 season.

In July, Conference USA announced that 11 of Middle Tennessee’s 12 regular-season football games have been selected for television in 2014, with eight being part of the league package.

Middle Tennessee football’s Kevin Byard and T. T. Barber were voted to Conference USA’s 2014 preseason first team by the league’s 13 head coaches.
Many are surprised to learn that one out of five degrees awarded at MTSU is a graduate degree. In fact, the College of Graduate Studies offers over 100 programs in the arts, sciences, education, and business. The reality is that MTSU is aggressively transitioning from a primarily undergraduate institution to a doctoral research university with significant research activity.

The College of Graduate Studies recently welcomed interim Dean and Vice Provost for Research Jackie Eller. Chair of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology since 2008 and a professor at MTSU for 29 years, Dr. Eller also directed graduate studies for her department for five years.

A three-year strategic plan has been implemented in the college, and several important graduate programs have been introduced or are in development. The new Accelerated Bachelor’s-to-Master’s (ABM) program encourages eligible students to complete their bachelor’s and master’s degrees in five years. Seven programs have already been established, and more are in development:

- Actuarial Sciences M.S.
- Bioinformatics M.S.
- Chemistry M.S.
- Economics M.A.
- Foreign Languages and Literatures M.A.T.
- Information Systems M.S.
- International Affairs M.A.

The Master of Criminal Justice program has been revised to include a nonthesis option to better address the needs of students in that discipline.

The Master of Professional Studies has added a concentration in Human Resource Leadership.

New programs are in the pipeline for approval by the concentration in Human Resource Leadership. The number of students in that discipline.

In addition, we have done the following to support our graduate programs:
- Increased outreach to undergrads and alumni through activities such as Grad Fair, Senior Day, Grad Open House, and Veterans Fair, improving visibility with our number-one feeder school.
- Stepped-up efforts to reach out to adult working professional students through participation in industry and employee fairs, especially with the newly approved Human Resource Leadership concentration in the Master of Professional Studies program.
- Enhanced military outreach, particularly with the Tennessee National Guard, addressing the particular educational needs of military personnel and their families.
- Added an immigration specialist to our staff with the goal of enhancing our service and responsiveness to international students.
- Raised the visibility of and enrollment in our GRE and GMAT workshops.
- Adopted a marketing plan for 2014-15, including a year-round campaign on WPLN public radio and an upcoming social media campaign with 12th and Broad, a new Tennessee outreach targeting the 24-40 Nashville market.

On the research side, the Office of Research Services (ORS) continues to provide a broad range of support to faculty, staff, and students while carrying out its three-year strategic plan to increase the size, number, and quality of research proposals.

**One Out of Five Degrees Awarded at MTSU Is a Graduate Degree**

During FY 2014 the ORS accomplished the following:
- Provided support for submission of 195 proposals, a 23% increase over FY 2013 and the largest number of proposals submitted in one year at MTSU.
- Managed 265 active grants and contracts with no audit findings.
- Met proactively with new MTSU faculty and held group brainstorming sessions, resulting in a fourfold increase in proposals from untended faculty. New tenure-track faculty members submitted 50% of the proposals requesting $500,000 or more.
- Initiated new collaborative projects with nine Tennessee colleges and universities and Alabama A&M University and submitted over $17 million in proposals.
- Increased NSF funding to $2.8 million (five times the amount in 2013) and NIH funding to $632,000 through new grant successes. Dr. Jason Jesson (Biology) received the largest NIH grant ever at MTSU—$1.6 million.
- Solicited invention disclosures, resulting in nine provisional or utility patent applications and one issued patent.
- Increased economic development and commercialization activity, including an effort to develop Dr. Charles Perry’s (Engineering Technology) hybrid car in Turkey. Participated in automotive manufacturing (one of 12 designated nationally by the Economic Development Administration) and interacted with state economic accelerators nationally by the Economic Development Administration and LaunchTN.
- Awarded and administered FRACAC (31 faculty) and URECA (99 students) research and creative grants and partially funded startup packages for new faculty.
- MTSU’s commitment to research and to transforming students into scholars supports our goal of becoming the leader in research and graduate education in Tennessee.
Continuing the new, streamlined practices established last fall, faculty will continue to:

- report attendance in the first 14 days of the term (through census date) for all classes,
- report midterm grades for all undergraduate courses,
- report academic progress for monitored students (athletes only) in the later part of the term, and
- report an updated last date of attendance for all F’s and incomplete grades.

Reporting attendance in the first 14 days allows intervention if needed to get students engaged in the class while there is still time for them to catch up and be successful. This replaces the first academic progress reporting requirement, which was focused on gathering this type of information. It will also allow Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs to make needed adjustments to reduce aid or benefits to stay in compliance with federal standards. The student is then notified well in advance of the financial impact of not attending class rather than at the end of the semester, when it’s too late to re-engage and successfully complete the course.

Midterm grading is required for all undergraduate courses. It gives students important feedback, informs other parties on campus who can intervene and engage with students, and gives students important feedback, informs other parties on campus who can intervene and engage with students, and informs other parties on campus who can intervene and engage with students. It will also allow Financial Aid and Veterans Affairs to make needed adjustments to reduce aid or benefits to stay in compliance with federal standards.

MTSU was one of only two of the six Tennessee Board of Regents universities that received increased funds from the adjustment. All three University of Tennessee schools also received increased funds. Fiscal Year 2014–2015 is the first year after the full implementation of the THEC Outcomes-Based Funding Formula.

The new state budget for this fiscal year did not include any funding for cost-of-living increases for state employees, K-12 teachers, or higher education employees. Therefore, any salary increases have to be funded by the institution. Due to the minimal state appropriation increase and anticipated enrollment reduction, no compensation plan increase for MTSU was proposed to the Tennessee Board of Regents.

Faculty promotion increases and other promotion increases will, however, still be made. The state budget for this fiscal year did include $1,120,000 in one-time capital maintenance funds for a chiller and tower replacement project at MTSU. Also, the new budget again included funding to match eligible employees’ deferrals in the 401(k) plan and for continued longevity payments.

ết fell is expected to be down again this year. Because of that, there may be only minimal funds available for new initiatives. As a result, budget fund reallocations will be required to meet higher-priority needs. Some funding may be only one-time funding, not base, and will require an end-of-year review to see if continued funding is warranted. Base funding may also be moved from areas where needs have decreased because of reduced enrollment to areas of growth and to projects and initiatives needed to reverse declining enrollment and to support our student success initiatives.

In June, TBR approved 2014–2015 institutional and system office budgets. The budgets included tuition increases. MTSU was approved for a 5 percent increase in tuition. This increase reflects increases in such things as academic personnel costs, the cost to open the new Science Building, faculty promotion salary increases, and some of the student success initiatives.

During its meeting, the board expressed heightened concern about continuing increases in tuition and fees and indicated a general desire to better understand actions taken by institutions to become more efficient.

MTSU leaders will meet with TBR leaders this fall to discuss budget development processes and other issues of interest. The goal is to communicate the successes, challenges, and needs of MTSU so TBR leaders can properly convey those messages to various stakeholders, including regents, legislators, and the state administration.

As you are probably aware, the governor has proposed a plan to allow Tennessee students to attend community colleges at no charge beginning in fall 2015. We anticipate this will affect our enrollment for the next few years, making it even more important that we retain and graduate the students we enroll.

### Fundraising

Over the past year, campus-wide fundraising efforts surpassed $10 million and successfully garnered support for a number of critical projects and initiatives. This level of giving places MTSU among the top 10–15 percent of its national peers and further demonstrates the incredible support we continue to receive from our alumni and friends.

Scholarships and student support continue to be the number-one fundraising priority, directly driving our student success initiatives. Significant gifts were also secured last year for endowed faculty positions, the fine arts, athletics, and capital projects, including several naming gifts in support of the new Science Building.

With less than 18 months remaining in the Centennial Campaign, we are well positioned to reach and exceed our goal while providing important long-term resources to strengthen many of our top overall priorities. One example of a gift made to the University during the ongoing Centennial Campaign is a corporate donation of $15,000 from the southeast chapter of the International Beverage Packaging Association to endow scholarships for students in our new Mechatronics Engineering degree program.

An example of a mechatronic system is a surgical robot, which performs precision mechanical work under sophisticated electronic and sensory control. MTSU’s push into mechatronics education promises to raise the department’s standing in the rapidly growing field of mechatronics.
Construction Update

MTSU continues to be an exciting place to work and study, in large part because of so many renovations and the new buildings underway or opening for use. Here is a brief update on recent and current projects.

1. **Science Building.** Move-in is substantially complete. The building is open for classes and labs this fall. (Please see the accompanying article in newsletter.)

2. **Football field turf replacement.** This project is complete, and football practices have already taken place on the new field.

3. **Student Services and Admissions Center/MT One Stop.** The new building was occupied this spring and is fully operational for the start of the fall semester.

4. **Murphy Center Renovation.** The project remains on schedule for completion before the start of the 2014-2015 basketball season.

5. **Cope Administration Building.** The project is on schedule.

6. **McFarland Building Renovation.** The project is on schedule for completion by the end of 2014, and the building should be ready for occupancy for spring semester 2015.

7. **LRC 101, College of Education Professional Development Center.** Construction will be completed and the center will be occupied this fall.

8. **Bell Street Center Renovation.** Planned occupants include graduate studies for the Jennings A. Jones College of Business, the University College, and Counseling and Testing Services. There will also be garage and surface lighting improvements and new fencing around the green space. Construction is planned to begin this fall, and completion is scheduled for summer 2015.

9. **Flight Simulator Building.** The project designed to house flight simulators for the Aerospace Department is scheduled to bid this fall.

10. **Underground Electric.** The new Murfreesboro Electric Department substation on Rutherford Blvd. is nearing completion. The second electrical entrance to the campus will be energized this fall. This infrastructure work provides the additional flexibility and capacity needed to address present and future needs of the University.

True Blue Respect

True Blue Respect is a student-focused campaign that reinforces community standards. With the beginning of each new school year, it’s important that we all be reminded of the elements of this campaign. Two of its standards involve the proper use of golf carts and our ongoing push to keep our campus clean and beautiful.

Golf Cart Etiquette

The start of fall classes brings an increase in traffic and more golf carts. Please remember the Environmental Health and Safety Committee’s guidelines for proper golf cart use. Golf carts travel in areas frequented by thousands of pedestrians daily, and carts and people also share space with the growing number of bicyclists on campus. Golf cart safety guidelines seek to improve driver and passenger safety, prevent theft, and help preserve the landscape.

Anyone who is responsible for or drives an MTSU golf cart can check the Environmental Health and Safety website, www.mtsu.edu/ehs/, for instructions on complying with the golf cart guidelines. A map of preferred golf cart routes is also on the site.

Examples of the guidelines include the following:

- Drivers should travel on campus roadways and designated routes when possible.
- Drivers are to slow down or stop at blind intersections.
- Drivers are to drive carefully, be courteous, and yield to pedestrians.
- Passengers must ride in a passenger seat with limbs inside the cart.
- Keys must not be left in parked carts.
- Lock down the cart to protect it from theft.

Clean Campus Crew

Keeping our campus beautiful is a point of school pride for the Clean Campus Crew. These dedicated students are chosen to participate in a program that gives them a work-study opportunity including the waiver of some tuition and fees. The crew works in conjunction with Facilities Services, which maintains the grounds of the entire University. The Clean Campus Crew has helped significantly in removing unauthorized signage, which creates visual clutter and, eventually, litter. The willingness to spend time to help beautify our campus is an indication of school pride—or what we call “Respecting the Blue.”

Daily Double

Jimmy Staten was selected in the fifth round of the 2014 NFL Draft by defending Super Bowl champion Seattle Seahawks. Staten found out during his graduation ceremony in May. He was given a rousing ovation from the crowd. Other Blue Raiders invited to NFL camps this summer included Sammy Seamster and Kenneth Gilstrap (Ravens), Logan Kilgore (Saints), and Josh Walker (Colts).
Timecia Terry, a recent graduate who interned this spring with state senator Jim Tracy, (R-Shelbyville), was among 13 MTSU students who worked as legislative interns during the most recent session of the Tennessee General Assembly. Mark Byrnes, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, said the internships provide students hands-on experience in legislative matters from bill analysis to constituent concerns, research, and general office work. The University funds internships for students serving the Rutherford County legislative delegation. Students can also compete for spots assisting other lawmakers and committees through the broader state legislative internship program. Sen. Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro) was so impressed with intern Sara Mejia-Gomez that he asked her to help in the research for his proposal to study the feasibility of a monorail from Murfreesboro to Nashville. Ketron later hired Mejia-Gomez to work in his private business in Murfreesboro after graduation.

MTSU has partnered with Meliksah University and Firat University in Turkey to further develop Dr. Charles Perry’s retrofit wheel-hub motor, which converts a standard gasoline-powered vehicle into a plug-in hybrid with just a minor alteration to the rear wheel hub, cutting a vehicle’s fuel consumption by half or more. Turkey is like the Detroit of Europe. Many European automobile companies manufacture cars there, and because of the high price of gasoline, people in the region are already spending $1,000 to retrofit their cars to use cheaper fuels.

A Public-Service Standout

Hons student Tandra Martin was selected a recipient of the 2014 Harold Love Outstanding Community Involvement Award. She is one of only five students and five faculty or staff members in the entire Tennessee Higher Education system selected to receive a $1,000 award in recognition of significant public service. Tandra’s father is Terry Martin, who works for MTSU in Printing Services. A Buchanan Scholar majoring in International Relations, Tandra recently studied abroad in Costa Rica and Israel. Martin is currently preparing to spend a year in Morocco after winning a David L. Boren Scholarship sponsored by the National Security Education Program.
working in tandem with professors will have a cumulative effect within the colleges. As experts in their disciplines, faculty members will continue to provide essential advice about courses, academic programs, and career and graduate school possibilities. College-based advisors will support the faculty but also take a more proactive and real-time approach to students who are struggling. Using a new software package the University is adopting, college advisors will be able to reach out to students who might be having trouble academically as identified through instructor alerts or the predictive analytics function of the software. Other universities have seen great results from similar, more proactive methods of advising.

EXL. The Experiential Learning Program has demonstrated promise as a means to increase engagement with a corresponding increase in retention. The program gives students an opportunity to gain practical experience in a real-world environment related to their academic learning. The six-year graduation rate for students taking EXL courses is 86%—well above the average.

Course Redesign. We have launched a mammoth effort in recent years to change how we structure and deliver some General Education courses in which too many students were failing. With much effort and painstaking faculty review, these courses have been redesigned in an effort to increase attendance, engagement, and eventual success. Courses that have higher-than-average numbers of D, F, and W results are being reexamined and potentially redesigned to encourage student engagement and increase retention. Consideration will be given to all aspects of these courses. One example of course redesign from the College of Basic and Applied Sciences involves the Geosciences Department’s “flipping” of classrooms for some Introduction to Earth Science sections. A flipped classroom offers a form of blended learning in which students learn new content online by watching video lectures, usually at home, and doing what used to be homework (assigned problems) in class, with teachers offering more personalized guidance and interaction and less lecturing.

Scholars Academy. Seven years ago, the Scholar’s Academy was developed to attract and acclimate qualified low-income, Pell-eligible students to the University and equip them for success. Historically, the program enrolled a small group of students (32 or less) and gave them an opportunity to earn six credit hours, learn success strategies, become acclimated to college life, and develop a network of peers. This summer, the program experienced a whopping increase of eighty participants (a 156% increase) for a total of 114. These students will continue to meet with student-success staff during the spring and fall semesters to strengthen both their academic and social connections. They will participate in workshops that will include such topics as note-taking techniques, how to study for midterm and final exams, financial literacy, and how to build a personal winning team.

Midterm Grades. The midterm grade initiative ensures that students know where they stand academically when they most need to know it and can receive appropriate updates and feedback from their professors. The participation of our faculty in this initiative is critical to the overall success of our students. In its first year of implementation, the program had 100% participation in the spring 2014 term.

Tutoring. The tutoring spot located in the Walker Library, in concert with other Tutoring Spots located in the departments, provides free supplemental instruction opportunities to help all MTSU students as they strive for success.

Sophomore Engagement. While the freshman-year experience has received a great deal of attention, research indicates that many second-year students feel a sense of abandonment, which can result in student attrition. Increasing student involvement in campus life and academic programs is one of the keys to retention on which we are very focused.

Undeclared-General Areas of Interest. Recent mandates by the Tennessee Board of Regents require us to modify how we deal with students who are not ready to select a particular major. Such students now receive extensive advising support.

Career Development. While emphasis has been placed on increasing graduation and retention, we must also consider ways to ensure that our students graduate with the necessary skills to get a job and a realistic understanding of the job market. University College is piloting a new approach encouraging students to identify preferred career choices and use those choices to identify an appropriate major. Initial feedback has been very positive.

Alternative Degree Options. Many students change majors numerous times during their college careers, or they are faced with candidacy issues and are forced to make changes. Often, credit hours earned in one major can’t be applied to others, resulting in lost time and money. In fall 2013, the revised Bachelor of Science in Integrated Studies degree (formerly the Bachelor of University Studies degree) was launched with the specific goal of providing a valuable option to make use of these potentially “lost hours.”

Recapture of Previously Enrolled Students. Work responsibilities, family issues, and financial problems often cause students to delay enrollment until it is too late and semesters are missed. Advisors have been asked to call all previously enrolled students who have yet to register for classes in the upcoming semester. This is an opportunity to encourage them to stay on track and deal with issues that might be hindering them. In conclusion, colleagues and friends, I exhort you all: Let us boldly and resolutely continue our Quest for Student Success! True Blue!

True Blue! Student Success! Let us boldly and resolutely continue our Quest for Student Success! True Blue! Student Success! Let us boldly and resolutely continue our Quest for Student Success! True Blue!

Connection Point
During the eleven CUSTOMS orientation sessions that occurred this summer, staff from the Division of Student Affairs has been talking with students about the Connection Point program, and specifically about this year’s newest addition—rewards!

We know that the first six weeks of the semester are critically important for student success. Students need to connect academically in the classroom and socially outside the classroom to feel like they belong at MTSU. That’s why all our students, especially freshmen, are being asked to attend a variety of events and activities during the first six weeks of the semester where they can receive participation points that can be redeemed for various rewards. Students are being asked to bring their Blue IDs with them to the events so Student Affairs staff can capture their cards and record their involvement. Students who are not connecting with the campus community will be contacted to find out how we can get them to become more involved. You can learn more about the Connection Point program at www.mtsu.edu/connection.

Changes to Convocation
Because of Murphy Center renovations, Convocation as we have known it will move, but for this year only. Opening Night ceremonies will take place Saturday, Aug. 23, at 5:30 p.m. in Floyd Stadium followed immediately by the annual President’s Picnic on the west concourse of the football and on the plaza outside Gate 3.

While this year’s event will be decidedly less formal with the absence of academic regalia, the event will still showcase our commitment to welcoming our newest students to and letting them see what it means to be True Blue!

Summer Reading
This year’s summer reading selection is This I Believe, edited by Jay Allison and Dan Gediman. Mr. Allison is the Opening Night keynote speaker. Based on the popular National Public Radio series of the same name, the book features 80 different statements of individual beliefs from both the well known and unknown.

Connection Point
During the eleven CUSTOMS orientation sessions that occurred this summer, staff from the Division of Student Affairs has been talking with students about the Connection Point program, and specifically about this year’s newest addition—rewards!

We know that the first six weeks of the semester are critically important for student success. Students need to connect academically in the classroom and socially outside the classroom to feel like they belong at MTSU. That’s why all our students, especially freshmen, are being asked to attend a variety of events and activities during the first six weeks of the semester where they can receive participation points that can be redeemed for various rewards. Students are being asked to bring their Blue IDs with them to the events so Student Affairs staff can capture their cards and record their involvement. Students who are not connecting with the campus community will be contacted to find out how we can get them to become more involved. You can learn more about the Connection Point program at www.mtsu.edu/connection.

Changes to Convocation
Because of Murphy Center renovations, Convocation as we have known it will move, but for this year only. Opening Night ceremonies will take place Saturday, Aug. 23, at 5:30 p.m. in Floyd Stadium followed immediately by the annual President’s Picnic on the west concourse of the football and on the plaza outside Gate 3.

While this year’s event will be decidedly less formal with the absence of academic regalia, the event will still showcase our commitment to welcoming our newest students to and letting them see what it means to be True Blue!

Summer Reading
This year’s summer reading selection is This I Believe, edited by Jay Allison and Dan Gediman. Mr. Allison is the Opening Night keynote speaker. Based on the popular National Public Radio series of the same name, the book features 80 different statements of individual beliefs from both the well known and unknown.
Tobacco Free

I am constantly reminding our campus community that compliance with our tobacco-free policy is not optional and that there are consequences for violations. Students in violation will be referred to Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services. Disciplinary sanctions range from warnings or reprimands to suspension or expulsion for the most egregious instances of noncompliance. Faculty and staff who fail to comply will be reported to their supervisors for discipline. Consequences ranging from warnings to unsatisfactory job performance ratings (which will result in denial of any across-the-board state salary increase) will be imposed.

Let me stress that e-cigarettes are included in the tobacco-free campus ban.

We have come a long way in a short time with the effort to stamp out smoking on our campus. I am very proud of the progress we’ve made, and I thank all of you for your response to this matter. Never-

The declaration “I am True Blue” is more than just a marketing phrase. Each time these words are repeated, they underline our core values of honesty and integrity: respect for diversity; engagement in the community; and our commitment to reason, not violence.

In meeting this commitment, we have a reporting and investigative structure that allows us to act quickly and decisively when we become aware of complaints of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual violence. If you have knowledge of any such complaints, you are required to contact a Title IX coordinator or deputy coordinator.

I cannot stress enough what an important issue this is to our community. If you know about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, report it.
The opening of MT One Stop on March 10 in the new Student Services and Admissions Center gave students one place to go for assistance with financial aid, billing questions, transcript requests, registration assistance, and all enrollment management functions.

This past summer, MT One Stop staff assisted nearly 400 students daily and fielded a high of 1,400 calls per day. The staff answers approximately 150 emails per day. Through MT One Stop, every student has an assigned enrollment counselor to help with the recruitment process, orientation, and enrollment and to serve as a knowledgeable resource all the way through graduation!

The $16 million Student Services and Admissions Center is the latest example of the University’s emphasis on student success and its focus on keeping students enrolled and on track to graduate. The 58,000-square-foot building is perfectly aligned with the Complete College Tennessee Act, which requires state appropriations to be based on retention and graduation rates, not enrollment. This new approach to providing personal, comprehensive, and coordinated enrollment services is also in step with Gov. Haslam’s Drive to 55 initiative, aimed at raising the number of Tennesseans with college degrees or certifications to 55 percent by 2025.

MTSU is determined to offer students every opportunity to succeed.

True Blue!

LIGHTNING WAY, which connects the Student Union and houses everything related to admissions, records and enrollment, financial aid, scheduling, and the Bursar’s Office. One location for all these services is a new experience for students, who previously had to go to several different offices spread out over campus to handle some of their most pressing concerns. The combination of a new building and the revamping of the University’s service model for enrollment management has significantly decreased frustration and allowed students to sharpen their focus on academic achievement. The goal is to remove barriers and make being enrolled at MTSU easier and more convenient.

The design of the building and the concept behind MT One Stop are perfectly aligned with the Complete College Tennessee Act, which requires state appropriations to be based on retention and graduation rates, not enrollment. This new approach to providing personal, comprehensive, and coordinated enrollment services is also in step with Gov. Haslam’s Drive to 55 initiative, aimed at raising the number of Tennesseans with college degrees or certifications to 55 percent by 2025.

MTSU is determined to offer students every opportunity to succeed.

True Blue!

MTSU signed various agreements with universities in China this spring.

The partnership with Hangzhou Normal University for a Confucius Institute at MTSU was granted a five-year extension. The institute is sponsored by China’s Education Ministry to promote Chinese language, history, and culture through tours, exchanges, and academic partnerships. MTSU joined Hangzhou Normal to open the institute in 2010. Another pact will allow select juniors from China’s top communication university to complete their bachelor’s degree studies in Murfreesboro and then earn master’s degrees from MTSU in one year. The agreement aligns MTSU’s acclaimed College of Mass Communication with Communication University of China, known as the cradle of China’s broadcasting and telecommunications talents.

MTSU gained an international partner with expertise in mechatronics engineering through a pact signed with Shanghai Second Polytechnic University (SSPU) enabling student and faculty exchanges and joint research projects.

SSPU specializes in energy generation and manufacturing motor vehicles and aircraft. MTSU recently launched a Mechatronics Engineering degree program.

An agreement with Xiannan University in Chenzhou, which specializes in teacher training and medical sciences, will also allow student and faculty exchanges.

Last, MTSU signed an agreement with Shaanxi Normal University (SNU) in Xi’an, home of some of China’s top cultural sites including the archaeological dig of terra-cotta warriors at the mausoleum of the first Qin emperor. Both universities began as teacher training schools and remain committed to that mission. SNU was among three hosts for a group of Rutherford County schoolchildren and parents visiting China in July as part of a Confucius Institute cultural exchange.

CAPITOL PRAISE

I was very grateful to be honored in April by the Tennessee State Senate for our collective efforts to expand and strengthen the University’s international partnerships and educational outreach. Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey welcomed me and my wife, Elizabeth, to the Senate chambers for the reading of a resolution by state senator and alumnus Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro), pictured below.

MTSU signed various agreements with universities in China this spring.

The partnership with Hangzhou Normal University for a Confucius Institute at MTSU was granted a five-year extension. The institute is sponsored by China’s Education Ministry to promote Chinese language, history, and culture through tours, exchanges, and academic partnerships. MTSU joined Hangzhou Normal to open the institute in 2010. Another pact will allow select juniors from China’s top communication university to complete their bachelor’s degree studies in Murfreesboro and then earn master’s degrees from MTSU in one year. The agreement aligns MTSU’s acclaimed College of Mass Communication with Communication University of China, known as the cradle of China’s broadcasting and telecommunications talents.

MTSU gained an international partner with expertise in mechatronics engineering through a pact signed with Shanghai Second Polytechnic University (SSPU) enabling student and faculty exchanges and joint research projects.

SSPU specializes in energy generation and manufacturing motor vehicles and aircraft. MTSU recently launched a Mechatronics Engineering degree program.

An agreement with Xiannan University in Chenzhou, which specializes in teacher training and medical sciences, will also allow student and faculty exchanges.

Last, MTSU signed an agreement with Shaanxi Normal University (SNU) in Xi’an, home of some of China’s top cultural sites including the archaeological dig of terra-cotta warriors at the mausoleum of the first Qin emperor. Both universities began as teacher training schools and remain committed to that mission. SNU was among three hosts for a group of Rutherford County schoolchildren and parents visiting China in July as part of a Confucius Institute cultural exchange.

CAPITOL PRAISE

I was very grateful to be honored in April by the Tennessee State Senate for our collective efforts to expand and strengthen the University’s international partnerships and educational outreach. Lt. Gov. Ron Ramsey welcomed me and my wife, Elizabeth, to the Senate chambers for the reading of a resolution by state senator and alumnus Bill Ketron (R-Murfreesboro), pictured below.
The College of Liberal Arts celebrated another successful MTSU Arts season in 2013–2014. A big highlight was a presentation of the award-winning *Les Misérables*, which made school history by selling out four consecutive shows in the recently enlarged Tucker Theatre. The show's production was led by director Kristi Shamburger, assistant professor in the Department of Speech and Theatre, and musical director Raphael Bundage, professor and director of choral activities in the School of Music.

Community awareness and support continues to grow for MTSU Arts events. Ascend Federal Credit Union became the first-ever presenting sponsor and is planning to continue its partnership in the coming season. MTSU Arts certainly provides year-round entertainment for the entire area to enjoy.

The 2014–2015 season will kick off with a patron reception in Todd Art Gallery on September 11 beginning at 6:00 p.m. I am humbled to announce that this reception will feature my own photo exhibit, *China through the Eyes of an American University President*. We invite the entire University community to attend the reception or to just stop by and visit the exhibit between September 10 and 12.

Tucker Theatre will begin its fall season with a production of *Tall Tales*, September 24–28. The School of Music’s Jazz Artist Series will feature “A Tribute to Illinois Jacquet” on October 20. For a full list of 2014–2015 MTSU Arts events, visit the calendar at www.mtsuarts.com.

Let me encourage you to join the MTSU Arts Patron Society, which offers various opportunities to enjoy special events, exhibits, and performances. To learn more, visit www.mtsuarts.com and click on the Patron Society tab at left. Membership in the society grew by 49 percent in 2013–2014. In addition, more than $18,000 was raised for the art, dance, music, and theatre disciplines in the college.

True Blue!