

External Resources Development Task Force
Dr. Van West, Chair

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The External Resources Development (ERD) Task Force has met with faculty, staff, administrators, and key university partners in its attempt to identify both new and increased external resources for MTSU in both short-term and long-term scenarios. After a half-day planning meeting, we divided into five sub-groups-- government, non-profits/foundations, private sector, alumni, and new partnerships—to ensure that a wide spectrum of ideas could be explored and that we would have an opportunity to discuss opportunities and challenges with many different individuals and programs.

We first note that MTSU, through the efforts of its faculty, its academic centers, its office of research, and its office of development has taken major steps toward being one of the region's leading research institutions in a host of specialized fields. We have built nationally competitive strengths across the colleges, and have taken major strides in making those strengths available to students, faculty, officials, and citizens through successful out-reach efforts and distance learning programs. Compared to the end of the twentieth century, MTSU has taken significant steps in the realm of external resource development in the first decade of the 21st century.

This achievement is to be both celebrated, and used as a foundation for a more aggressive commitment to grow the university through research and external funding opportunities. With the faculty, resources, and initiative now at work in all sectors of the university community, we can, and should, do more. We recommend the following steps to move MTSU to the next level of accomplishment and become the university that its students, faculty, staff, administrators, and alumni want it to be.

Recommendation 1: We must aggressively pursue and create new vehicles for reciprocal collaborations with governments, foundations, non-profits, and the private sector that can generate desired university outcomes: (1) larger funded grants, appropriations; (2) funds, appropriations that are tied into generating infrastructure support; and (3) funds, appropriations that connect research into the Ph.D. programs and have the potential of attracting international and professional on-line students.

We have identified two such reciprocal partnerships that can be established in 2009:

1. Create an Office of Industrial Partnerships on the MTSU campus

Because we are at the very beginning of developing partnerships, this office may keep track of IP, commercialization and economic development. SBDC could provide guidance for SBIR, bridge money from state.

- Centralized office to handle industry relationships
- Visit industries (take along faculty)
- Paperwork for paid internships (summer and other)
- Close ties with the career coordinators in each college
- Close ties with Development and SBDC
- Refer industries to closely allied departments
- EXL for profit
- Make sure that we establish a relationship with the big institutions and industries in the region. ***Now is the time because they will want to outsource research and training to us.***
- Educate university community about IP and commercialization.
- Handle patent and copyright projects and paperwork
- Royalties from use of trademark/logo
- Departmental liaison (faculty) to encourage departments to be more entrepreneurial

Costs: Hire a **Director** \$100K (\$80-\$120/y) and secretary ½ (\$20K). Total: \$120K

The director should have an MBA (perhaps P.E), but certainly experience in the area of IP and commercialization.

Return (midterm) Break even by 2nd year.

Serving as Headhunter role (5% of starting salary) x \$30k x 50 = \$75K (1st year), \$150K (2nd year), \$225 (3rd year)

50 – 100 – 150 interns placed a year that will secure either job with that company or similar company based on experience in industry.

Supplies: 50 /y x \$100 project can be formalized with a Special Problems class or EXL course.

In short term, this is a PR investment – priceless PR that we are organized, have something to offer – expertise, workforce.

2. Establish the Glen Leven Sustainability Center in Nashville. This partnership with governments and non-profits is led and funded in the initial planning and implementation by the Center for Historic Preservation (CHP). The partners will create a prominent Nashville base, the Glen Leven estate on Franklin Road, that will:

- provide MTSU graduate and doctoral students with an enhanced historic preservation/public history experiential learning experience, through classrooms in a National Register house and by extended experiences with other conservation and heritage organizations

- strengthen existing partnerships between the CHP, the Land Trust of Tennessee, and governments
- create an adult-learner focus center for the Library of Congress project,
- provide MTSU with an institutional base to work with its large Nashville alumni base,
- give MTSU an increased ability to attract students to its doctoral program in public history,
- and serve as an ideal demonstration of the type of community-focused, reciprocal collaborations that benefits students, faculty, departments, and the goals of the academic master plan.

Costs for MTSU: planning, reassignment of staff: estimated \$45,000 annually, covered in the first two years by the CHP and its federal appropriations for the Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area and the Teaching with Primary Sources partnership with the Library of Congress. Once established and fully operational, the major partners began to recruit and develop multiple types of funding sources.

Recommendation 2: Through leadership and dialogue, the university must experience a significant culture shift, one that moves away from models that have served us well in the past but that have lost their influence in the 21st century. MTSU is a research university and needs to develop a system-wide approach to resource development that research institutions typically follow. There needs to be asset-focused thinking; in attitude we must be a more entrepreneurial campus, and be more pro-active rather than re-active. Bundling MTSU assets to attract new resources will yield maximum impact only if we also take a collaborative approach to creating new relationships with the corporate and foundation worlds.

We have identified several approaches to creating such a change.

- A university-wide, permanent “Research and Development Task Force” could analyze, clarify, and leverage the campus’s specific strengths and niche areas. By holding meetings, forums, and online discussions with the university community and the many interested parties in MTSU (especially the need to develop directed appropriations from governments), the task force could identify and recommend areas of emphasis with the bigger picture (larger funding opportunities) in mind. This group might be composed of directors of the various Centers on campus, along with representatives from the Development and Research Offices, and members selected by the Faculty Senate.

- The Faculty Senate should be encouraged to take on the responsibility of working with interested MTSU administrators and staff to create a faculty expertise template, through which faculty could indicate their research, teaching, and service areas of interest and expertise. It should be general enough to be used by both the Development and Research Offices. Such a database would allow both offices to be more proactive in identifying fundable proposals.
- Greater encouragement of and credit for faculty grant writing (e.g., from workload reform to the role that sponsored funding and grant writing can play in the tenure and promotion process) is needed from department chairs and college deans.
- Increases are needed in the amount of seed money available for internal research grants. These grants should focus primarily on the need to facilitate the seeking of larger funding opportunities. There is also a need for increased summer salary and release time incentives to get faculty to seek funding. This money is an investment that can and does pay off for the university.
- Increased administrative support (e.g., departmental and college secretarial support) is needed for both grant writing and post-award periods.

Recommendation 3: MTSU has the ability to create a campus environment and commitment to developing life-long learners among our students, alumni, and partners. That vision should be the consistent message we present to ourselves, our students, and our supporters. As we grow student enrollment, and maintain our statewide leadership in undergraduate education, we must give emphasis to increasingly, significantly, our numbers of graduate, international, and out-of-state students. We also need to take advantage of such national and international interest in our signature programs and departments through new partnerships in on-line course offerings and adult education programming.

We have identified several approaches to achieving this recommendation:

(1) Start the student-university relationship at the beginning, and do it right

- One of the most important factors in sustained alumni giving is the relationship between the student and faculty – both during school and after graduation
- Students (and their parents) need to be introduced to the campus giving culture and tradition, starting at CUSTOMS and reinforced during their academic years
- Alumni should be encouraged to participate in a variety of on campus activities (not just athletic events) and establish “alumni discounts” for musical, theatrical, etc. events to encourage their attendance and still generate revenue. *We believe the various units that provide athletic, cultural and social programming*

should reduce the number of “free” programs and develop a pricing structure for events that recognizes their value and contribution to the community.

- Develop an “Adopt a Student” program for alumni and staff to provide support resources for new students (increasing retention) and providing expanded engagement for participating alumni and staff
- Expand the Alumni Summer College program additional weekends, one-day mini-colleges) to increase opportunities for engagement with alumni and friends.
- Utilize a Legacy Scholarship program to provide scholarship support for children of alumni and encourage greater alumni financial support
- Target alumni as prospective “returning” students – especially for graduate programs and/or fee-generating non-academic short courses and workshops

(2) Establish and/or enhance fees and services for alumni

- Look at cost/benefit of moving a portion of alumni communications to on-line or alternative delivery, and utilize savings to enhance alumni programming
- Provide revenue based services for major commodities, like insurance, travel, merchant discounts etc., that are appropriate for our alumni and provide significant program revenue to the University

(3) Expand traditional giving opportunities

- Better align academic funding needs with alumni interests
- Target alumni working for matching gift companies for special solicitations
- Develop a focus on planned gifts – include seminars for alumni, faculty and staff

(4) More effectively utilize and promote alumni to enhance the reputation of the University

- Spotlight key alumni – using their business and professional success to raise the visibility of the institution and provide role models for prospective students
- Create an informal network of key alumni at business the University would like to partner with and utilize their expertise in developing the relationship

These three inter-related recommendations have been our focus in the first month of discussion. We are still exploring such issues as:

1) Reviewing the Potential of Asset-Based Development

Our previous report strongly urged asset-based development, offering a range of services and benefits to large area businesses in exchange for funding.

We think this model could also help build long-term connections with area manufacturers in rural areas. Managers of a number of these businesses have MTSU connections, and would welcome an opportunity to explore mutually beneficial relationships. Potential revenues are unknown.

2) The Potential of Sale-lease back of MTSU facilities

This option consists of the sale of existing and/or new facilities at MTSU to private interests; MTSU would receive an injection of capital, while private investors receive a stream of revenues spread over a number of years. Revenue-generating facilities would be the most likely starting place. Pat Geho is exploring the legal and practical aspects of this option. Potential revenues are unknown.

3) The need to explore fully the opportunity of 24/7 online courses and/or off-campus instruction

Non-credit courses are currently offered or are planning to be offered during non-traditional class times. We recommend extending this model to for-credit courses. Potential revenues are unknown.