Summary of QEP MT Engage Town Hall Meetings

Two “town hall” meetings were held in the Spring 2015 semester to gather input from faculty and staff on the QEP, MT Engage. These were hosted by the Faculty Senate and held March 24 and April 1. Attendance ranged from 29 to 35 faculty and staff. A brief overview of MT Engage was given along with a one page FAQ. The majority of the time was devoted to open discussion of all participant questions.

Many excellent questions and ideas were generated from these discussions. This is not a list of each question presented at the Open Forum but represents a synthesis of the questions as well as updated information about MT Engage since the forums occurred.

1) How will the MT Engage program work?  
Interested faculty will receive training regarding the components and requirements of MT Engage courses and will submit an application to have their section designated as an MT Engage course. These courses would include a 1) high impact, engagement pedagogy; 2) a beyond the classroom experience; and 3) integrative/reflective thinking assignment(s) which is placed in the ePortfolio. Students who complete a designated number of MT Engage courses and complete the ePortfolio requirements at the end of the sophomore year are eligible to submit an application for the MT Engage student scholarship. Students who complete additional MT Engage courses and their senior ePortfolio will receive recognition (such as recognition at annual banquet, awards, etc.) the semester they graduate. Majors who opt into the program can utilize the ePortfolio as part of their capstone course and can create an ePortfolio template to meet their program student learning outcomes.

2) How will MT Engage be implemented?  
The QEP is a 5 year plan and we envision the recruitment of courses taking place in phases as follows:

I. Pilot MT Engage courses in fall 2015 and spring 2016.
II. Fall 2016 kick off MT Engage with freshman and sophomore level MT Engage classes (Year 1).
III. Fall 2017 recruit additional freshman and sophomore level MT Engage classes (Year 2).
IV. Fall 2018 kick off majors (Year 3).
V. Fall 2019 recruit additional majors to participate (Year 4)
VI. Fall 2020 kick off graduate programs (Year 5).
3) What measures will be taken to support support faculty who choose to participate in MT Engage?
Efforts to support faculty participation focus on faculty development and support. A Faculty Development Plan is being created. Strategies being recommended include faculty learning communities so that there is 1) increased discussion on campus about academic engagement strategies, integrative / reflective thinking, and using ePortfolios; 2) a workshop series that introduces faculty to the components of MT Engage program; and 3) a summer MT Engage institute for faculty committed to teaching an MT Engage course. Additionally the LTITC, FITC and Library have identified ways they can support faculty who teach MT Engage sections.

4) What kind of efforts will you have to get more participation from faculty?
Efforts to increase faculty participation focus on faculty development and support (See number 3 above). A communication plan will also be implemented to ensure that faculty are aware of the program and how they can participate.

5) Will students register in designated MT Engage sections?
MT Engage sections will have an attribute attached so that students wanting to participate in the program can search and then register for MT Engage courses. Registration will not be restricted; thus, some students may register for an MT Engage section without intentionally doing so. Identifying these sections and students will also assist in the assessment process.

6) How will MT Engage recruit students to participate in the program?
We plan to begin recruiting freshman students prior to their arrival at MTSU via social media and at CUSTOMS sessions. The Action Plan Committee is currently developing a marketing plan that will outline the ongoing recruitment plan.

7) Will the university provide support for students who choose to participate in the MT Engage program?
Support for students will be available through the University Writing Center, Library Digital Media Studio, the MT Engage Office as well as other MT Engage students serving as mentors. The ITD Help Desk will also help students.

8) Will there be student incentives to participate in MT Engage?
Yes, student incentives being proposed include early registration, scholarships for outstanding MT Engage students, annual recognition at banquet, opportunity to be a mentor, and some type of award in senior year.
9) For majors that already use an ePortfolio, will this program duplicate or complement those ePortfolios?
It is possible that students will have more than one ePortfolio. For example, the College of Education currently uses TK20 which provides an ePortfolio. Those students who participate in MT Engage may also have an ePortfolio outside of TK20. However because these are electronic records students can easily move artifacts and reflections between systems. The support services that will be provided to students and faculty who are building ePortfolios through the University Writing Center, Library Digital Media Center, LTITC, etc. will complement majors who currently use ePortfolios.

10) What is the goal for student participation in the MT Engage program?
We are setting benchmarks for our program goals now which include numbers of participants, sections, departments, etc. This is an opt-in program, and we are not expecting 100% participation. However we do hope that in 5 years the program is integrated across the campus.

11) Is the ePortfolio component mandatory for MT Engage classes?
What about paper portfolios?
Yes the ePortfolio component is part of an MT Engage class. We envision at least one “signature” assignment being placed in the ePortfolio with a reflection component. Based on literature reviews and the interest of several departments in using ePortfolios, we feel that this will be a value added to the students and support assessment efforts. We are not considering paper portfolios.

12) What items would go into a student’s MT Engage ePortfolio?
Evidence of the knowledge, skills, and abilities could be demonstrated through work samples including: research papers, documents, presentations, videos, photos, etc. Students could include letters of recommendations. Also they will include reflections on the integration of their courses and learning experiences in order to express the fullness of their experience at MTSU and how this learning will transfer to new situations. Career goals and objectives and a resume can also be included.

13) Will students’ MT Engage ePortfolios be available for public viewing?
We envision a default privacy setting that would allow the student and faculty to see the ePortfolio, but also provide the students with the authority to expand the privacy settings for their ePortfolios so that they could allow fellow MTSU students to view their ePortfolios, as well as the ability to share them with anyone, at any time.
14) Can students carry their MT Engage ePortfolio beyond graduation?
We prefer that students be able to maintain their ePortfolio beyond graduation and would like a system that provides this service for students at no cost upon graduation; however, this will depend on the tool that is selected.

15) Have you considered introducing the MT Engage ePortfolio in a class such as UNIV 1010 or English or at initial advising?
Yes we are currently working with a few UNIV 1010 instructors to launch a pilot course in the fall 2015. We hope to recruit additional courses such as ENGL 1010 and 1020. We have met with the advising managers to provide information about MT Engage and request their input. They will play an important part in the dissemination of information to students about MT Engage.

16) Has there been any thought to adding a one-hour capstone course to finish working on the MT Engage ePortfolio?
This is not currently part of the plan, but could be considered at a later date if it seems necessary. We envision majors that participate in MT Engage selecting a course (or several courses) where the ePortfolio is utilized and a capstone course where the ePortfolio is completed. Support for students will be available through the University Writing Center, Library Digital Media Studio, and the MT Engage Office as well as allowing other MT Engage students to serve as mentors.

17) Are you going to tailor MT Engage ePortfolios for each area of study?
There will be some consistency to the ePortfolios so that demonstration and assessment of learning outcomes can take place. However, we envision that majors that participate in MT Engage would tailor the ePortfolio for their major. Majors that participate in MT Engage could select a course (or several courses) where the ePortfolio is utilized and a capstone course where the ePortfolio is completed.

18) Who will help MT Engage students determine what items should be included so it will be targeted toward their goals?
We envision that faculty from the majors that participate in MT Engage would tailor the ePortfolio for their major. The MT Engage Office will provide assistance to students as well.

19) Who will assess the MT Engage ePortfolios?
Faculty teaching MT Engage courses will be asked to participate in the assessment of the ePortfolios for extra compensation.
Additional suggestions:

- Internally allow for students to share ideas, suggestions or support via the ePortfolio
- Find a student to showcase whose ePortfolio was the driver behind their hire
- Build this into Scholar’s Week
- Consider how to involve transfer students
- Support our international students in the program
- Need the ePortfolio to support the demands for audio, video and storage
- Need resources to help if something goes wrong with the technology
- The ePortfolio could be used by advisors