


2000-2011



Academic Master Plan

for

Teacher Education Partnership

Middle Tennessee State University



Academic Master Plan

Middle Tennessee State University

1

Middle Tennessee State University will aggressively pursue academic initiatives in areas of competitive advantage—where its unique strengths intersect with the region’s growth opportunities.

2

Middle Tennessee State University will deepen excellence in its academic core and target continuous improvement of its undergraduate and graduate programs.

3

Middle Tennessee State University will create a student-centered learning environment responsive to the needs of a diverse student population and accountable to citizens and taxpayers.



In a truly rational society, the best of us would be teachers, and the rest of us would have to settle for something else.

Lee Iacocca,
*What Matters Most:
Teaching for America's Future*

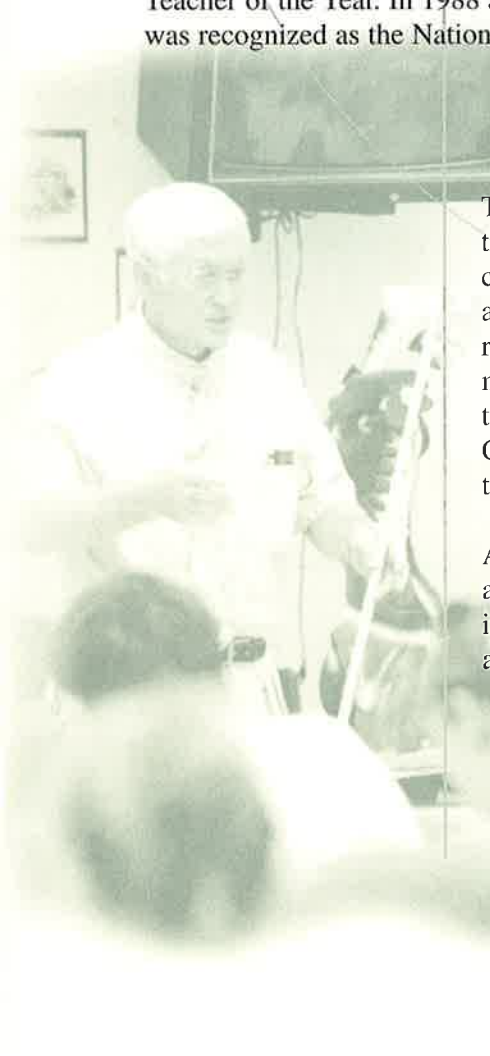


Academic Master Plan

Teacher Education Partnership

Since 1911, the education of teachers has remained central to the mission of Middle Tennessee State University. Today, the College of Education and Behavioral Science is home to one of the largest undergraduate teacher education programs in Tennessee. In addition to preparing teachers, MTSU also prepares administrators and guidance personnel through its many graduate programs. Approximately 25 percent of all teachers in Tennessee are graduates of MTSU.

A number of these graduates have distinguished themselves as educators. Many have been recognized as outstanding teachers and three graduates have been selected as the Tennessee Teacher of the Year. In 1988 alumnus Terry Weeks, who currently serves on the MTSU faculty, was recognized as the National Teacher of the Year.



The mission of the College of Education and Behavioral Science goes beyond the training of educators and school personnel to include public service. The faculty conduct workshops for teachers and administrators in a variety of areas such as aerospace, geography, biology, environmental education, mathematics, science, reading, special education, school improvement planning, and technology and information access. Often these workshops are offered with the cooperation and assistance of faculty in the College of Liberal Arts, the College of Business, and the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, confirming the campus-wide commitment to teacher preparation and to cooperative programs with public schools in the region.

Additionally, the College of Education and Behavioral Science has a strong tradition and commitment to research. The faculty are engaged in a broad range of research initiatives ranging from basic research to more action-oriented research designed to address practical classroom problems.



The College recognizes that ensuring quality teacher education graduates requires that teachers be prepared to use instructional technology effectively. The Instructional Technology Support Center, housing the latest in computer-based instructional technology, offers pre-service teachers the needed information and experience to use technology in the classroom. The Center's satellite up-link capabilities allow MTSU to provide assistance to schools in the region by transmitting workshops, courses, and conferences directly to public school sites.

Furthermore, the College also provides exemplary programs to aid special populations. The Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia and the Chair of Excellence in Dyslexic Studies provide support and assistance to schools, parents, and students in addressing the problems associated with dyslexia. Project HELP addresses the needs of developmentally delayed children. Other programs and initiatives, such as the Institute for the Visually Impaired and the Academy for Teachers of the Gifted, support the education of students.

In 1997, Middle Tennessee State University implemented the Academic Master Plan, which was designed to provide a framework for future academic initiatives. An important element of the Academic Master Plan was the appointment of vari-

ous partnerships that were charged with developing goals and recommendations to "take programs in which MTSU has 'competitive advantage' to regional, and perhaps, national recognition." In other words, how can we make these very good programs even better and be even more responsive to the projected needs of the region? Education was identified as one of these partnerships.

Consequently, the Partnership on Teacher Education, composed of members from across the University and local Pre K-12 public schools, was appointed in August 1998. During the 1998-99 academic year, the Task Force reviewed regional and national reports, analyzed data relevant to teacher education programs, sought the input from regional and national consultants, and reviewed survey data from the MTSU faculty.

The Partnership believes this report should be viewed as a foundation for planning the future of teacher education at MTSU. Though no single document can address all of the opportunities or issues that may develop in the years ahead, the Partnership expects that this report will become the basis for substantive action within the teacher education departments and across the university about the promising future of teacher education at Middle Tennessee State University.

Mission

The mission of the Professional Education Programs at Middle Tennessee State University includes three primary areas of emphasis: the preparation of teachers and other school personnel, assistance in the improvement of Pre K-12 educational programs, and research. Middle Tennessee State University seeks to develop in prospective teachers and administrators the skills, essential knowledge, and professional attitude that will enable them to work successfully in a variety of educational settings and roles, thus transforming the educational enterprise to yield an improved society. The University is committed to providing a broad range of programs and services to its partners in diverse Pre K-12 settings. The University recognizes the responsibility of providing new knowledge gained from research on a wide range of education problems and issues.

Vision

Our vision is to develop collaboratively with internal and external constituencies creative and innovative educational programs that will enhance Middle Tennessee State University's position as a leader in education in Tennessee and in the region. By developing dynamic partnerships with our Pre K-12 colleagues, we will provide exemplary programs; conduct research and provide services designed to produce highly professional, skilled, competent graduates; assist in the continuing improvement of Pre K-12 schools; and provide leadership in increasing the awareness of the vital role education plays in a democratic society.

Goals

The Teacher Education Partnership, through collaborative participation within the MTSU campus community, as well as the mid-state service area, identifies the following goals:

GOAL 1:

Collaboratively develop exemplary programs and experiences designed to produce highly professional, skilled, competent graduates capable of working successfully in a variety of settings and roles.

GOAL 2:

Improve the quality and quantity of resources allocated to professional education programs.

GOAL 3:

Develop and enhance dynamic partnerships.

GOAL 4:

Attract and retain a more diverse student and faculty population.

GOAL 5:

Assist in the continuing improvement of the K-12 and professional education through increased research activity and the dissemination of information about best practices.

GOAL 6:

Enhance the status of the teaching profession.



Goals and Strategies

Goal

1

Collaboratively develop exemplary programs and experiences designed to produce highly professional, skilled, competent graduates capable of working successfully in a variety of settings and roles.

Middle Tennessee State University is home to many outstanding professional education programs. Project HELP, the Chair of Excellence in Dyslexic Studies, the Academy for Teachers of the Gifted, the Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia, the Homer Pittard Campus School, and the Rural Education Assistance Programs are but a few of the programs that make MTSU a recognized leader in education. These programs, coupled with the fact that approximately one-fourth of all teachers who are hired in Tennessee's schools are MTSU graduates, create exciting opportunities to better serve

education in Tennessee and the region. However, if these opportunities are to be fully realized and if our teacher education programs are to gain regional and national prominence, we must recognize that the foundation for excellence lies in the quality of the professional education programs that are available to undergraduate and graduate students. In order to ensure that students have access to the latest and best knowledge base, MTSU seeks to collaborate across campus and with area schools and the Tennessee Department of Education to develop programs that meet or exceed state, regional, and national standards. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future has recognized the importance of developing professional education programs that meet high standards. The Commission notes that:

Standards for teaching are the linchpin for transforming current systems of preparation, licensing, certification, and ongoing development so that they better support student learning. They can bring clarity and focus to a set of activities that are currently poorly connected and often badly organized. New standards and new opportunities for teacher education must be reinforced by incentives that encourage teachers to acquire ever greater knowledge and skill. These incentives can then, in turn, support the redesign of schools so that they organize themselves more effectively for student and teacher learning.

By collaboratively improving our current programs to meet high standards and developing new programs to better serve our various constituencies, our graduates will be able to achieve higher standards of performance. Higher standards for graduates of professional education programs will ultimately produce classrooms and schools in which higher student learning is accomplished.



Strategies

By November 2000 a plan will be in place that sets standards and performance-based assessments for students in each professional education program. Departmental effectiveness committees will analyze assessment data and develop both short-term and long-range improvement plans. Improvement plans will be an integral part of the budget and resource allocation cycle.

Each department offering graduate degrees in professional education will assess current graduate offerings and implement revised as well as new graduate-level programs. The first cycle of this process will be completed by Spring 2001.

Funding for reassigned time for graduate coordinators to assist in assessment and planning will be made available to departments by Fall 2001.

By September 2000 a committee will be appointed by the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science to redefine and expand the "Partnership Schools" concept which will enable field placement of students at more diverse and

exemplary sites. The committee will make its recommendations to the dean by May 2001.

Beginning with the Fall 2000 semester, field experience courses such as student teaching will be staffed with full-time experienced clinical faculty. This staffing process will be incremental with full clinical staffing by January 2002.

By June 2000 the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science will appoint a committee charged with developing a plan to enhance and expand programs to assist beginning teachers in the middle Tennessee region. The committee will submit their report and recommendations by December 2001.

MTSU will explore expanding off-campus graduate offerings in middle Tennessee to areas such as Coffee County, Williamson County, and Maury County and when feasible, utilize alternative delivery modes. The first new site will begin offering courses in Fall 2001.

Goal

2

Improve the quality and quantity of resources allocated to professional education programs.

Additional resources are required as MTSU moves its professional education programs to regional and national prominence. Providing 21st century classrooms, attracting and retaining high quality faculty, expanding the use of technology, lowering the student-to-faculty ratio, increasing the number of field placements for students, and providing additional assistance to Pre K-12 schools will require significant resources.



Strategies

Clearly identify the resources necessary for the implementation of the Partnership plan by January 2001.

Provide funding for a position of grant writer for the College of Education and Behavioral Science by Fall 2001.

In order to begin the process of converting the existing learning resources center into a professional education facility, all non-professional education functions such as the Gore Center, Publications and Graphics, Photographic Services, and the university radio stations, will be moved to other sites on campus by Fall 2002. The area currently occupied by Publications and Graphics will be converted into two 21st century classrooms. Target date is Fall 2003.

Construct a professional education facility onto the McWherter Learning Resources Center with a sufficient number of 21st century classrooms to train educators to use 21st century computer-based technology effectively. Target date for completion is Fall 2006.

By May 2001, the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science, in collaboration with department chairs and faculty, will develop a policy that converts appropriate public school experience to university experience in order to attract experienced public school educators to the MTSU faculty.

The director of the Instructional Technology Support Center will develop a plan for increasing both equipment and personnel support for technologically intensive programs. The plan will include providing for increased resources for technology training for both higher education and Pre K-12 personnel. An annual budget supplement for programming will be in place by Fall 2001.



Goal

3

Develop and enhance dynamic partnerships.

The preparation of teachers is a campus-wide responsibility. Indeed, this responsibility extends beyond the boundaries of Middle Tennessee State University to include area school districts, the State Department of Education, businesses and civic organizations, and philanthropic foundations. Building on a history of developing collaborative partnerships, the University seeks to further strengthen ties with those who have an interest in the professional preparation of educators. Developing new partnerships as well as strengthening existing ones will be a key element in efforts to implement the strategies presented in this plan.

Strategies

Develop a Professional Education Partnership Council in order to strengthen ties with those who have an interest in professional education, particularly the preparation of educators. The Council will consist of members appointed by the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science and will include representatives from the MTSU faculty, the business and civic communities, and area school districts. The Council will be appointed by May 2001. The Council will develop a strategic plan by June 2002.

By Fall 2001, the Teacher Education Council will develop a plan to increase involvement with various MTSU academic departments in order to strengthen communications with faculty across campus.

Goal

4

Attract and retain a more diverse student and faculty population.

"..... by the year 2010, at least a third of all children in this country will be members of groups currently considered 'minorities.' Big-city schools are already educating a new generation of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Central America, Asia, and Africa, one that rivals in size the great immigrations of the 19th and early 20th centuries."

What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future
(p.13)

In order to meet the needs of the 21st century we must prepare educators to work successfully in schools where more and more students are from culturally diverse backgrounds. We must aggressively recruit, enroll, and retain students from diverse backgrounds into educator preparation programs. Just as challenging is the need to attract and retain a university faculty that reflects the diversity of the region and the nation. But more importantly, we must equip our students with the knowledge and skills that enable them to work successfully with students from a broad range of cultures.



Strategies

By Fall 2000, the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science will appoint a task force of area-appropriate Pre K-12 school personnel and MTSU faculty to collaboratively develop plans to identify and recruit potential minority teacher education faculty and students.

Five student minority teaching scholarships will be awarded to students each year beginning in Fall 2001.

By January 2001, a plan will be developed by the Teacher Education Leadership Committee to enhance the mentoring and support activities for teacher education students.

Each teacher education department will set specific recruiting goals and strategies for the purpose of hiring diverse faculty. The goals and strategies will be reviewed by the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science by May 2001.

The dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science will collaborate with the African-American Studies Program faculty at MTSU to encourage African-American students to seek a career in teaching by January 2001.

Beginning Spring 2001, the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science, working collaboratively with department chairs, will develop supplemental teaching formats such as a lectureship series that features regionally and nationally recognized educators representing various cultural and ethnic groups.

The Teacher Education Leadership Team will develop initiatives to encourage faculty and student exchange programs. The initial emphasis will be on exchange programs with Japanese universities where MTSU already has official partnership agreements and with the COST overseas student teaching program. Plans to enhance exchange programs will be developed by January 2001.

Goal

5

Assist in the continuing improvement of Pre K-12 and professional education through increased research activity and the dissemination of information about best practices.

MTSU is committed to assisting schools in their improvement efforts. No one benefits if universities prepare better teachers but these new teachers suddenly find themselves working in poorly performing schools. Universities can be significant partners with Pre K-12 educators in many ways, but one of the most important contributions universities can make is to provide new knowledge about best practices and to assist schools in the implementation of new approaches. Additionally, the University recognizes the need for new delivery systems when it comes to providing services to area schools. The increased use of technologies, such as on-line and satellite up-link capability, enables MTSU to offer exciting courses, in-service training, and tele-conferencing programs in a much more efficient and effective way.



Strategies

By January 2001 a plan will be developed to establish a Center for School Partnerships. The purpose of this center will be to collaborate and assist in school improvement initiatives. Funding for the development of this plan will be sought from the public service committee. A director of the Center will be appointed. This Center would also work closely with the Development Office and the Office of Sponsored Programs to develop grant initiatives that support school improvement efforts. Activities of the Center will focus in part on expanding partnership initiatives with area school districts and pursuing partnership grants designed to assist in the improvement of Pre K-12 education as well as professional education programs.

By May 2001 the Center for School Partnerships will communicate with various MTSU departments regarding opportunities for faculty and graduate students to utilize school improvement initiatives as a source for applied research projects conducted collaboratively with Pre K-12 educators.

Goal 6

Enhance the status of the teaching profession.

The need for excellent teachers is ever more pressing. Perhaps now more than any other time in our history, our children are in need of knowledgeable, caring, competent, skilled professional teachers. Where will the teachers come from? How will we attract our brightest young people into a profession that is held in rather low regard by many? By developing exemplary professional education programs, MTSU can have a significant and positive impact on the status of the education profession. And, by doing so, we can set an example for Tennessee, the Southeast and, indeed, the nation. By enhancing professional education's prominence at MTSU, we can attract outstanding students and faculty to our campus.



Strategies

By May 2001, the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science will collaboratively develop a plan with the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce to gain support for initiatives aimed at enhancing the status of the teaching profession.

In the long term, increasing the number of teachers who are certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards will enhance the status of the teaching profession. By Fall 2001, a plan will be developed to increase the number of Pre K-12 teachers who seek certification by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

By May 2002, the appropriate graduate programs within professional education departments will reflect the standards of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

The dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science working collaboratively with the Board of Governors of the Tennessee Teachers Hall of Fame will develop a plan to enhance and expand the activities of the Tennessee Teachers Hall of Fame. This plan will be completed by January 2002.

It is particularly important that faculty in professional schools stay abreast of the latest research, trends, and issues in the profession by May 2001. Each teacher education department will analyze the professional development needs of their faculties and develop a focused plan to enhance opportunities for systematic, planned professional development.

By May 2001, the dean of the College of Education and Behavioral Science will appoint a task force to make recommendations regarding reorganization of the College of Education and Behavioral Science to focus exclusively on professional education programs and programs that prepare other professionals who work in school settings. Recommendation of the task force will be presented to the dean by January 2002.



The Challenge

One of the most important challenges of the 21st century is the need to prepare teachers and administrators that can work effectively in the complex and difficult world of the modern classroom. Since 1911 Middle Tennessee State University has been successfully meeting the challenge of preparing educators and this proud and distinguished history provides a solid foundation on which to build for

the future. To successfully meet the educational demands of the new millennium requires leadership, resources, and a plan of action. This Partnership Report represents a blueprint for the future that is realistic, credible, and motivating. The next challenge is to breathe life into the partnership recommendations so they become a reality.

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