

**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

THE REACH TO DISTINCTION

Middle Tennessee State University
ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN, 2015–2025



The University community seized opportunity, even in challenging economic times, to position itself for the future and firmly commit to a Quest for Student Success.

A community of scholars

IN BUILDING ON THE *Blueprint for Excellence, 2007–2017*, Middle Tennessee State University established a foundation for academic excellence built on its commitment to academic quality, student-centered learning, and mutually beneficial partnerships and outreach. These efforts resulted in one of the most notable eras in the University’s history, the apex of which was the celebration of MTSU’s Centennial. The University community seized opportunity, even in challenging economic times, to position itself for the future and firmly commit to a *Quest for Student Success*. It met its challenges during a decade marked with the establishment of a new College of Behavioral and Health Sciences and a new University College, the addition of over 25 undergraduate and graduate degrees, bringing the number of doctoral programs to nine, and the prestigious designation of the elective Community Engagement Classification from the Carnegie Foundation. The University witnessed an increase in enrollment of high-ability students, many of whom distinguished themselves nationally and internationally—14 were named Fulbright Scholars, five received Goldwater Scholarships, and one was named a Rhodes Scholarship finalist. The face of the campus changed with over \$700 million in construction and infrastructure upgrades, including the completion of the new 250,000-square-foot science and 91,200-square-foot education buildings, the new Student Union, and the Student Services and Admissions Center, housing the MT One Stop. The University met its original Centennial Campaign goal and reset its course to exceed the \$100 million mark, and its athletics programs moved to Conference USA.



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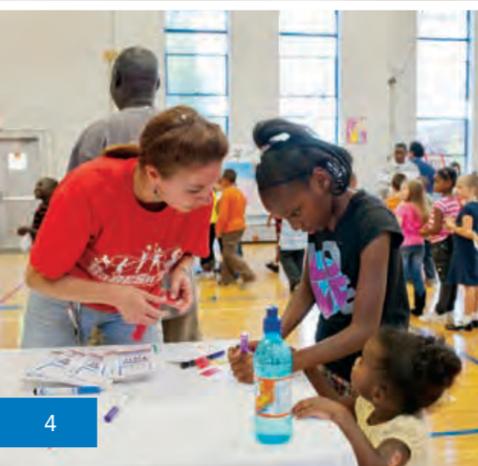
AS WE APPROACH THE COMING decade, the University stands poised to embrace further its responsibility to educate students and to deepen its educational impact, locally and globally, for the common good. The University stands poised both to continue strengthening its academic core and developing stronger, more purposeful relationships with its public, private, and nonprofit partners. The University stands poised to transform itself—in the reach to distinction.

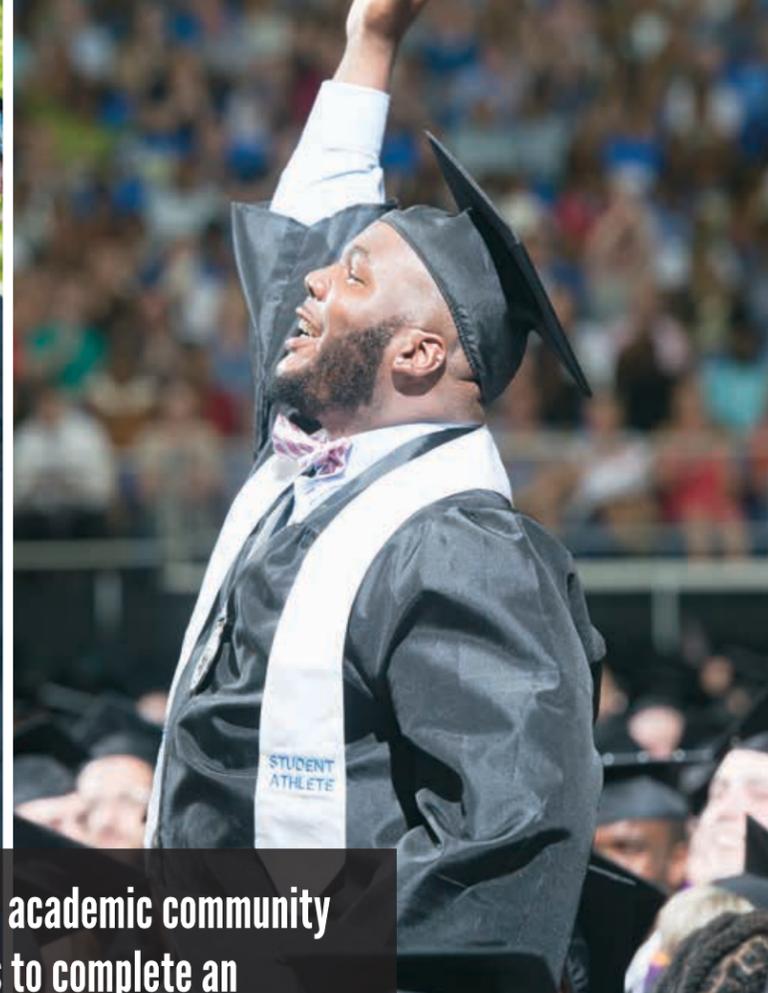
Primary to MTSU's pursuit of distinction is a commitment to Tennessee's "Drive to 55" and to the reaffirmation of the goals of advancing academic quality, fostering student-centered learning, and developing meaningful outreach and partnering relationships. The reach encompasses providing educational programs of high quality and value at all levels in established and emerging fields. The reach includes building lasting academic relationships between faculty and students through learning, teaching, and mentoring activities that engage faculty and students in a broad spectrum of learning experiences. The reach summons greater involvement of students in what faculty and the University do—research, creative activities, governance, service, community engagement, and partnership building with business and the nonprofit sector—across local communities and around the globe. The reach calls for a greater investment in the people, programs, and communities that contribute to the core academic enterprise of the University. The reach measures relationships and community service by their impact on the educational core of the University, its partnering communities, and the extent to which these activities contribute to the common good. By 2025, MTSU's reach to distinction will be evidenced by an academic community that is engaged in deep learning and scholarship, enriched by diversity in all of its manifestations, rooted in enhanced, distinguished programs and student success, marked by purposeful, sustained partnering relationships and outreach, and recognized for its educational impact on the economic and cultural landscape of the region and beyond.

Goals

Middle Tennessee State University will

- I. advance academic quality** through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service and the celebration of MTSU's strengths;
- II. promote student success and individual responsibility** for accomplishments through a community dedicated to student-centered learning; and
- III. develop purposeful and sustainable partnering relationships and outreach.**





A strong, engaged academic community prepares students to complete an undergraduate or graduate degree and empowers them to pursue the careers of their choice and the jobs of the future.



Strategic Directions

The University will focus on three strategic directions in pursuit of its goals—each one powerful in itself and each made immeasurably stronger in import and effect when pursued together as the University moves toward greater academic distinction.

Strategic Direction 1:

Promote engagement

Preparing students for success in college and a future of lifelong learning, professional development, and civic engagement requires a cohesive academic community that actively involves and integrates students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and partners in the life and activities of the University. A strong, engaged academic community prepares students to complete an undergraduate or graduate degree and empowers them to pursue the careers of their choice and the jobs of the future. An engaged academic community produces students and graduates who love learning, who commit themselves to ethical and responsible practices, who think critically, who communicate effectively, who adapt technology appropriately to learning, research, and problem solving, and who contribute meaningfully to and thrive in collaborative working environments.

To promote engagement that supports learning, scholarship, and student success, the University will

- implement aggressively the *Quest for Student Success*;
- achieve the goals of MT Engage;
- sharpen its focus on the internationalization of programs and partnerships;
- create more interactive learning/living spaces across campus; and
- facilitate collaborations among and between faculty, alumni, community, friends, and the business and nonprofit sectors.

Strategic Direction 2:

Foster academic community

MTSU will develop and nurture an academic community from the inside out and the outside in. Drawing upon both its current program strengths and its capacity to develop select, new programs in emerging, interdisciplinary fields, the University will foster relationships among its faculty, students, staff, alumni, and friends and between the University and its partnering communities. To support these collaborations, the University will increase its investment in creating, preserving, and sharing knowledge that sustains learning, scholarship, and outreach.

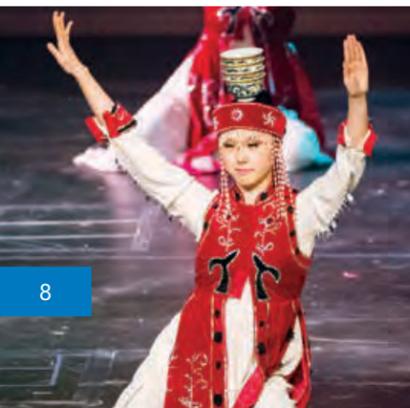
MTSU will build an academic community that celebrates diversity. A community that cultivates a diversity of people and values the free exchange of ideas is a catalyst for the creation of new knowledge and the development of distinctive programs to meet the needs of the University and the communities it serves. Academic community building advances accessibility for all students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the lifelong learners in our communities; encourages academic, civic, and professional engagement; and advances excellence and innovation in academic programs, scholarship, and the arts.

To foster academic community, the University will

- deepen commitment to access and diversity;
- develop innovative, interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs;
- promote increased and sustained research, scholarship, and creative activity;
- cultivate meaningful, reciprocal partnerships and public service programs;
- invest in the professional development of faculty, students, and staff; and
- recognize and celebrate achievement of excellence.



I am a learner, now and forever.
I am True Blue.



A highly engaged academic community requires dedicated resources, adaptive processes, and organizational procedures that promote innovation and recognize and reward excellence.



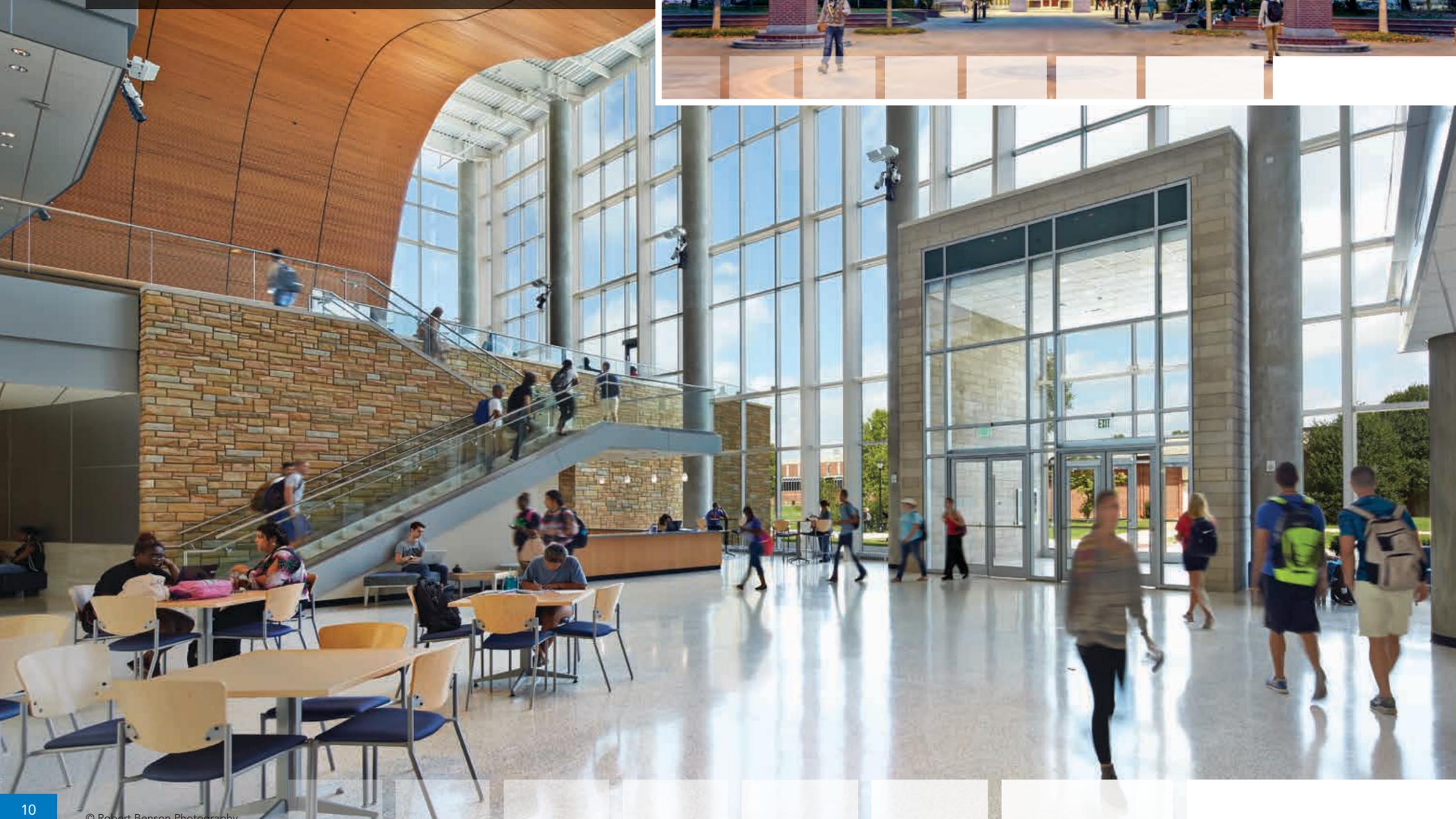
Strategic Direction 3:

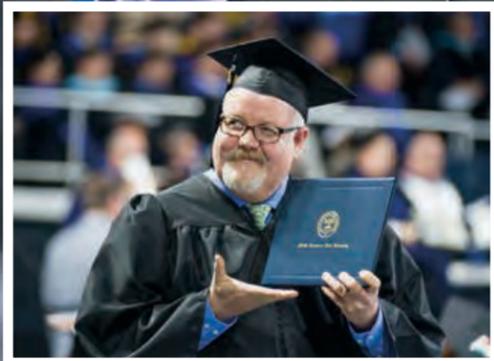
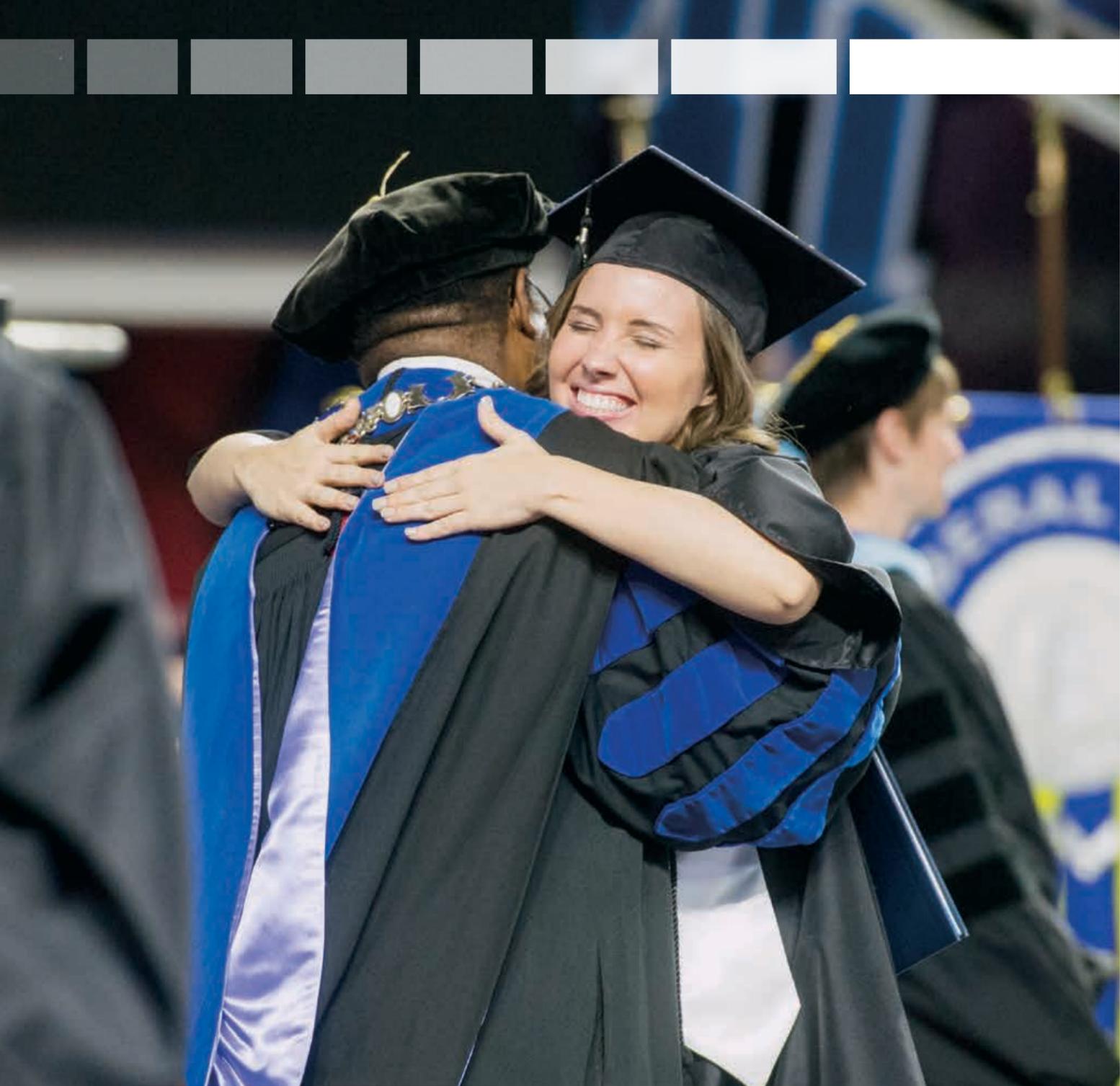
Innovate for effectiveness and efficiency

A highly engaged academic community requires dedicated resources, adaptive processes, and organizational procedures that promote innovation and recognize and reward excellence. Robust informational resources, most notably the James E. Walker Library, equipment, facilities, and technology access are integral to learning and research and are key factors in promoting academic quality and student success. An academic community grounded in collaboration and interdisciplinary initiatives calls for enhanced communication processes, informational resources, and infrastructure to facilitate community, civic, and academic engagement among and between faculty, students, staff, alumni, friends, and partners. A dynamic academic community requires ongoing assessment of the University's strengths aligned with opportunities that arise in the private and public sectors.

To innovate for effectiveness and efficiency, the University will

- encourage and support innovative programs and services;
- partner with business, industry, and nonprofit organizations to respond to their unique educational needs and the economic development of the region;
- promote communication, transparency, and accountability;
- create more flexible administrative processes;
- enhance its informational, physical, and technological infrastructure;
- promote efficiencies in its operations and processes; and
- create a welcoming, inclusive campus that is healthy and safe for all University publics.





The University will achieve greater academic distinction through innovation, a celebration of diversity, and a heightened sense of active engagement.

Enhanced academic distinction

BY 2025, MTSU WILL HAVE over 100,000 graduates living in the middle Tennessee area, with another 50,000 located across the country and around the world. Individually and collectively, their leadership capacity and professional achievements will continue to enrich the region that the University serves—shaping its culture, building and strengthening its economy, and infusing greater vitality into its civic life. The successes of its graduates, whether they live in or beyond the region, will be directly related to their capacity to create opportunities and be responsive to the challenges in the regional, national, and global arenas.

MTSU embraces its responsibility to educate students and prepare them to build their futures with confidence. Over the course of this academic master plan, MTSU will cultivate the Middle Tennessee State University community, a highly engaged academic community that shares a clear sense of purpose and a consistent story of quality, student success, and productive partnering relationships and outreach for the common good. The University will achieve greater academic distinction through innovation, a celebration of diversity, and a heightened sense of active engagement that takes advantage of the opportunities that arise and turns challenges into opportunities. In the coming decade, MTSU will both broaden and deepen the success footprint of its students and the local and global educational imprint of the institution in the reach to distinction.

“The hand that follows intellect can achieve.”

—Michelangelo





The Reach to Distinction

Academic Master Plan, 2015–2025

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