SPRING 2020 I ISSUE 2

MTSU FACT: Distance learners make up almost 37% of our undergraduate enrollment!

New Freshmen by Ethnicity	#	%
Alaskan Native and American Indian	10	0.3%
Asian	146	4.4%
Black or African American	653	19.7%
Hispanic	307	9.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	0.1%
Not Specified	9	0.3%
Two or More Races	140	4.2%
White	2,045	61.7%

Table 1.1: MTSU 2019 Fact Book Statistics

Intercultural & Diversity Affairs

Student Resources

- Diversity Employers is a database of job postings
- Career Builder is a website of job postings
- College Compass is a website of information related to college transition issues
- FastWeb is a database of scholarships for both minority and non-minority students
- Historically Black Colleges & University directory

**February is Black History Month*

**March is National Women's History Month*

Underrepresented Students

By Travis Strattion & Brelinda Johnson

Interesting Fact: Middle Tennessee State University has only been racially integrated for 55 years. In 1965, Olivia Woods became the first black student in the University's history. In 1965, the first black athletes were recruited for the track and basketball teams.

The transition into college is difficult for any student. Over the course of their matriculations, many students' at-risk levels fluctuate. However, students from underrepresented populations are often faced with more challenges than most. These students (including first-generation, low-income, and students of color) often enter the University with existing at-risk factors by virtue of their academic backgrounds. As they begin to navigate their new environment, many of those students become buried beneath a huge mass of information and instructions that sound more like a foreign language than not. Perhaps for the first time in their lives, students from these populations are hearing collegiate vocabulary, learning about basic institutional operations, and figuring out how to balance their academic and social lives sometimes without family support. For some, growing financial responsibilities and the pressure to succeed due to being the first ones in their families to attend college help to increase stress. Therefore, the more we as professionals understand what these students face the better we can equip ourselves with the tools to support them as they seek to enjoy a positive undergraduate experience while pursuing their college degrees. We often wonder whether students are prepared for the university. We should also assess how prepared the university is for students.

MTSU's 2019 Fact Book (see Table 1.1 above) reveals that minority students comprise 38% of the freshmen class. Of that percentage, 19.7% were Black, 9.3% were Hispanic and 4.4% are of Asian ethnicity (see table 1.1 below). For the last three years, the first-year retention rates of minority freshmen at our university is less than their White counterparts in all ethnicities except Asian students. It is important that educators and advisors recognize the countless opportunities in working with underrepresented students as they may need different forms of guidance during their academic journeys. Thus, continuous and relevant professional development is highly recommended.

A key element in underrepresented students being successful in college is a sustainable partnership between the student and the academic advisor.

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Interactions with first-generation students can no longer be a mere passing on of information or advice. Every encounter should be guided by a heightened sense of awareness and sensitivity to their needs and expectations. These students are less receptive to a transactional approach in advising. Understanding nuances is critical. In advising sessions lies the potential for experts (who are well-versed in programmatic offerings and are passionate about helping students) to foster relationships with young adults who require intentional guidance that will help position them for success.

When working with underrepresented students, the developmental advising approach has shown positive results in helping students be successful academically and gain the most from their collegiate experience. Developmental advising encourages advisors to use strategies that meet each individual student's unique needs. When advisors use holistic approaches, the educational, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds of each student are considered and valued.

Additionally, Arthur Chickering's Seven Vectors of Student Development can assist advisors in understanding the developmental stages of students as they begin college. The seven vectors align uniquely with how first-generation students should be advised and supported holistically. Advisors should encourage growth that promotes developing competence, managing, and processing emotions; becoming more independent; discovering who they are in this world; and developing the purpose, passion, integrity, and social intelligence required for interpersonal relationships.

Lastly, we know that student success invites all, includes all, and involves all. Every person on this campus contributes to that success. Academic advisors are incredibly vital spokes in the wheel that helps turn the success of both the individual and institution.

Table 1.2 MTSU 2019 Fact Book Statistics

New Freshmen Fall-to-Fall Retention by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Alaskan Native and American Indian	44.4%	80.0%	83.3%	75.0%	66.7%
Asian	83.1%	88.7%	82.6%	84.8%	78.2%
Black or African American	76.7%	74.7%	73.2%	71.5%	70.9%
Hispanic	73.2%	78.3%	76.4%	70.3%	71.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%	---	---
Not Specified	86.7%	93.8%	88.9%	68.8%	100.0%
Two or More Races	66.3%	68.5%	73.2%	71.8%	71.9%
White	72.5%	75.5%	77.4%	77.8%	77.0%

ADVISING TIPS & / 2

Working with Underrepresented Students

- Create an open, warm, and inviting space by being mindful of your body language and eye contact.
- Do not give in to your own biases and stereotypes.
- Listen more than speaking.
- Be authentic, students appreciate you being your true self.
- Be patient. Be an advocate. Students may not know what questions to ask or what comments to make.

Read more about **Appreciative Advising** and **Developmental Advising** models.

Scholars Academy
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

*MTSU's Scholars Academy is a freshmen year experience program designed to serve all students, with emphasis on the needs of first generation and/or Pell-eligible students, by providing them with a quality education in a supportive learning environment. The program provides study skills workshops, team-building exercises, leadership training, summer reading, and service-learning projects. View their Fall 2019 Wrap Up **here**.*

NEWLY ADDED
Advisor Resources

Below are brief descriptions of updated information that is now accessible through our advisor training website.

Change of Major Flowchart. Over the past few semesters, we've received several requests from advisors for clarity across campus on how to use the Change of Major form correctly. Most of it is intuitive, but not all. Download the flow chart to ensure you are following best practice and read some helpful tips below.

COM Tips

- Double check the M#
- When adding a second major, add a comment to verify you do not need the current major deleted.
- When replacing a major, make sure to select this under the Delete Major/Minor field.
- If you see a student has submitted an intent, contact your Graduation Analyst to help change their major.

Locating Academic Suspension Information in Banner. Download instructions on how to use Banner to find information about your student's suspension, such as when the student can return and if the suspension includes a summer term.

GI Bill Workshops for Summer 2020. Advisors are encouraged to attend one of the upcoming workshops geared towards helping students understand the VA requirements in conjunction with the new summer terms. Workshop dates are below, and all will be held in KUC 324.

- March 3rd | 9- 11 AM
- March 5th | 9- 11 AM
- March 16th | 1-3 PM
- March 18th | 1-3 PM
- March 24th | 4:30-6 PM
- March 26th | 4:30-6 PM

New Summer Terms. Starting this summer, there are several new summer term options, so it will be important for advisors to understand before working with students on their schedules. The below information is also accessible in a chart version available on our site for download you can share with your students.

- **Full (12 weeks):** 5/18–8/7
- **S3A (3 weeks):** 5/18–6/5
- **S6A (6 weeks):** 5/18–6/26
- **S5A (5 weeks):** 5/26–6/26
- **S3B (3 weeks):** 6/8–6/26
- **S3C (3 weeks):** 6/29–7/17
- **S6B (6 weeks):** 6/29–8/7
- **S5B (5 weeks):** 7/6–8/7
- **S3D (3 weeks):** 7/20–8/7
- **TN eCampus (10 weeks):** 5/26–7/31

Mail Merge Tutorial. Download step-by-step instructions that walk you through how to create personalized mass emails using Microsoft Word's Mail Merge feature.

Advising Worksheets. Download shared advising notes, worksheets, plans, CUSTOMS spreadsheets, study guidance handouts, etc.

Complicated Minor Referrals. Because minor signatures will no longer be required, we have compiled a list of complicated minors so students can still be referred to the correct person for guidance and other requirements.

FEATURED

LinkedIn Learning

By Jon Buchalski

LinkedIn Learning is an extremely free and useful tool for personal and professional development. It is a great way to explore interesting topics and learn new skills without having to register for an actual class. There are so many great topics that directly and indirectly relate to our roles as advisors: tutorials for programs like Microsoft Suite; for software like SPSS that can help bring validity to our work; and for soft skills like time management, utilizing data, and team building can be useful to enhance our work with students and other university stakeholders.

I started my experiences with this tool when it originally replaced Lynda.com to explore a topic I was interested in learning about--Six Sigma Foundations. The interface had a very useful training platform that provided a full breakdown of course material with time stamps, as well as transcripts and supplemental materials useful during the training. The video-based content could be paused and replayed at any point so to not miss any important information. After completion of the course I even received a certificate that was equivalent to a Yellow Belt Certification according to their course. Once Lynda.com was transitioned over to LinkedIn Learning the interface became even easier to use and was almost seamless with my personal LinkedIn account to be able to apply my certifications/learned skills directly. Next, I decided I wanted to learn AutoCAD software and knew that I could get the software from ITD. Once I had the software I was able to use LinkedIn Learning to go step by step through the tutorials with the software. The learning platform even had downloadable exercise files that coordinated with the on-screen tutorial.

I would highly recommend this resource to anyone interested in enhancing their career or just interested in a new topic.

MTSU FACT: MTSU staff is being offered trial access to *Ancestry*, *Newspapers.Com*, and *Fold3* for at least one year. Access these resources from the following link:

https://trials.proquest.com/access?token=WAwnUMUVSbDZPqfwANtSuvOqj

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Letter from the AMP Chair

By April Goers

Thank you, advisors, for all you do and for your dedication and excitement towards personal professional development and the AMP program. We have had a great year of events and participation so far. Currently 11% of advisors have already completed certification and 48% of advisors are halfway or ABOVE the points needed for certification. We still have seven events planned for the remainder of the year, but here are two I'd like to highlight:

- May 29th the "**Celebrating *Truly* YOU**" end-of-year advising celebration (save-the-dates will be going out soon)
- March 10th we will have another keynote presentation here on campus and would love to see you all there!

The AMP committee sent out a survey last month in hopes to gain valuable feedback for future planning. We will eventually send out another, so in the future, if you have input, these surveys are the best way to let us know. In the meantime, feel free to contact myself or one of our committee members: Paula Calahan, Sarah Gregory, Stacey Jones, or Megan Williams.

Soon, the call will go out for committee members for the 2020/2021 academic year. If you have a positive attitude and passion for professional development, we would love to have you join. Thank you again for all the great work you do.

UPCOMING TRAINING & AMP EVENTS

Targeted Training: One Stop Tour
Wednesday, March 4th

Hosted by MT One Stop's leadership. Click here to register.

AMP Keynote Speaker
Tuesday, March 10th

Break Up, Break Down, or Break Out: Confronting and Overcoming #AdvisorAtrophy. Click **here** to register.

Targeted Training: Microsoft Excel in Advising
Thursday, April 30th

Led by advisor James Wicks. Click **here** to register.

Targeted Training: Advanced Canva
Monday, May 18th

Led by advisor Bailey Schneider. Click **here** to register.

Celebrating *Truly* YOU Event
Friday, May 29th

End-of-year advising celebration hosted by the AMP and Training committees. Save-the-dates will be sent out soon.

ADVISOR TIPS & FURTHER READING

Surviving Priority Registration

Advice to and from MTSU Advisors

Based on your survey responses, the Training Committee has compiled concerns and corresponding advice for you.

HOW DO YOU HANDLE IT WHEN A STUDENT COMES UNPREPARED TO THEIR ADVISING APPOINTMENT?

- If they didn't bring necessary documents (e.g. advising folder) or come in more than 10-15 minutes late, have them reschedule.
- Have a discussion with the student about professional behavior and academic responsibility. Can begin this process with all students in your appointment campaign communication or through an advisor syllabus.
- It's important to set boundaries for yourself, as well as expectations for the student. If you have decided you need at least 20 minutes or the presence of their advising folder to conduct an exemplary appointment, be clear about this.
- All students make mistakes, so it is important to use this as a learning experience. If this is a pattern of behavior, an intervention might be necessary.

Follow-up reading on this topic: Speed Advising, Setting Boundaries

WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE ON MANAGING DAILY TASKS DURING THIS BUSY TIME?

- Use Quick Parts in Outlook to respond quickly to common questions.
- Set up an automated message that provides answers to commonly asked questions.
- Use Navigate's campaign feature to plan ahead (especially during the fall).
- Use Mail Merge to send out personalized emails in bulk using your Excel spreadsheet to targeted groups.
- Before campaigning, block off breaks in your calendar to allow yourself time to catch up on notes, prep for appointments, respond to emails, or just take a walk.
- In CBHS, advisors try to get students to come in earlier by sending emails to targeted groups. For example, they sent their first email last week to students who have 75+ hours. They plan to follow up with a text to the same group. They have a Communications Committee that creates emails for targeted groups and plans the dates.

*Follow-up reading on this topic: **Creating a Campaign**, **Setting up Mail Merge**, **Using Quick Parts***

HOW DO YOU AVOID BURNOUT?

- Build in breaks within your day. They can be before priority registration or after your schedule begins to fill. If you see a 30-minute break within a busy day, block that time so you can recoup: fill your water/coffee, go to the bathroom, get away from your desk, etc.
- Take your lunch breaks away from your desk if you can. At your desk, you are tempted to answer emails, answer the phone, answer the door if someone knocks, and that will definitely lead to you burning out!
- Learn to say "no" to social invitations or opportunities to attend functions that will only further drain your energy (starting at least two weeks before priority registration time).
- Work smarter, not harder. Find shortcuts for yourself, eliminate extraneous tasks, etc.
- Type notes into a Word document to use as templates that you can apply to different types of students.
- Use an appointment worksheet to fill out with the student in the appointment. If you don't have time to put in notes between appointments, you can just scan these worksheets into the Report at the end of the day. (Getting the student to fill out the worksheet with you also helps to hold them accountable during the advising discussion!)

*Follow-up reading on this topic: **Advisor Burnout**, **Dealing with Stress***

ADVISOR TARGETED TRAININGS

Letter from the Training Chair

By Bryanna Licciardi

Well-trained advisors add significant value to institutions in terms of learning, persistence, and overall student satisfaction. Advisors need planned, comprehensive training and development that span their careers. -NACADA, 2017

This May will mark one year with the newly designed advisor targeted training. In less than 10 months, we have teamed up with numerous campus partners to offer you over 25 individualized training sessions for over 120 attendees. We are already seeing the benefits to the development of this new training format. Using the survey sent to each participant after attending a session, we have compiled some excellent data: When asked about their confidence level, 100% of respondents said their confidence grew after attending the training. When asked how they would rate the overall value of the training, 100% agreed that it was both useful and relevant. Over 60% of respondents also said that their interest in the training topic grew after attending. This is a huge change in attitude and perception of training, which has been our goal as a committee. Advising is still considered a new profession, which means that the work we do and the expectations of our work are still developing. As advisors, training should, therefore, be seen as necessary to maintaining our skillset and to staying relevant.

This committee is diligent in providing relevant, valuable training opportunities for you, which means that your participation and feedback is key. If you have suggestions or would like to be involved, let us know. Committee members also include Tamika Mitchell, James Wicks, and Janaé Daniels. You may contact any of us directly, submit a **comment** on our website, or better yet, if you have a passion for this work, put in your name when new members are called!

View some data from the Post-Training Advisor Survey responses below.

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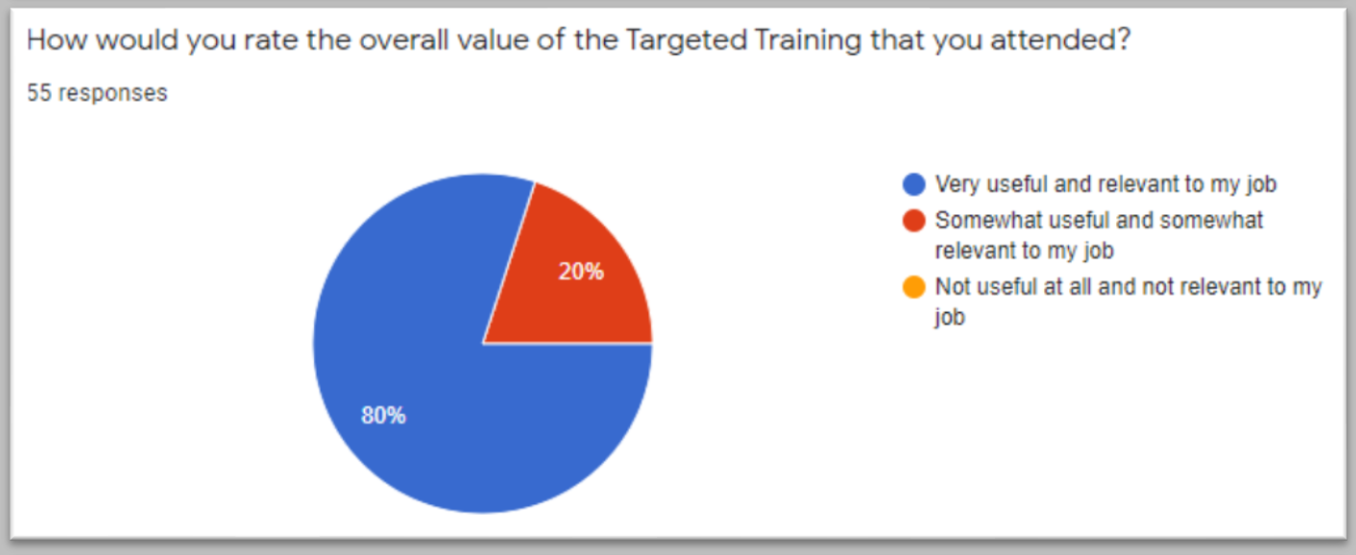

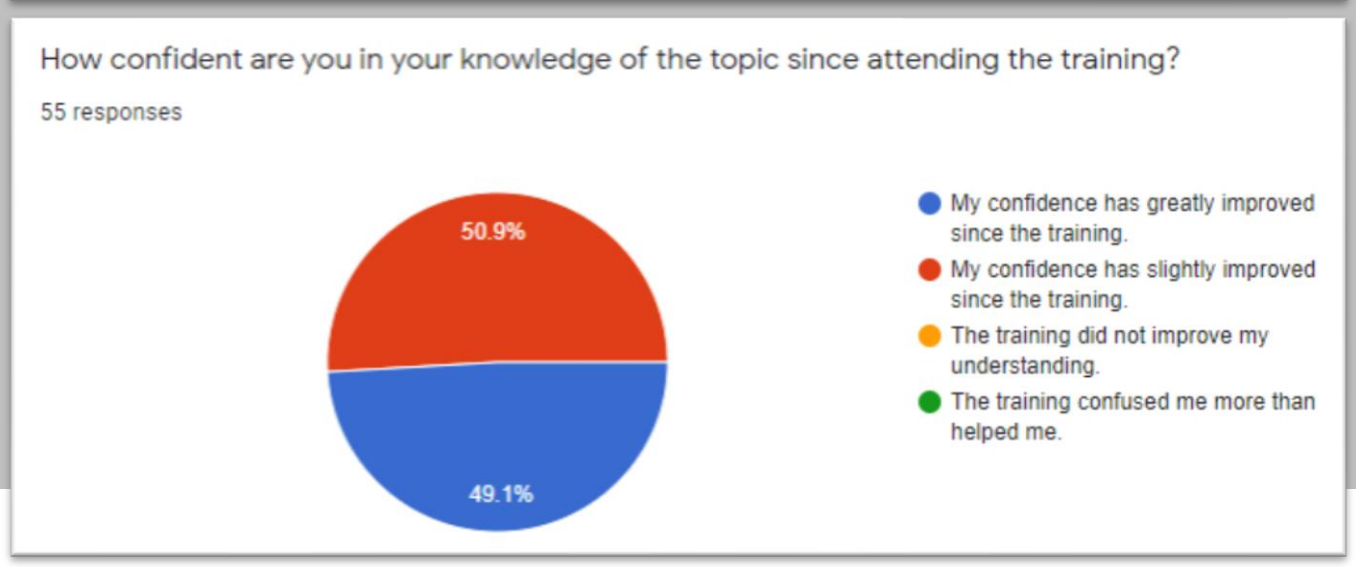

MESSAGES FROM LEADERSHIP

Development of Advisor Progression Proposal

By Dr. Rick Sluder

In Fall 2019, we were asked to create a proposal for an advisor progression plan. A work group was formed composed of Renee Clodfelter, Karen Petersen, Becky Cole, Tiffany Milfort, Eric Miller, April Goers, Gretchen Leming, Brian Hinote, and Rick Sluder.

The Advisor Progression Work Group met on several occasions during the fall of 2019 semester and a proposal was produced. The proposal has been submitted for review, and no decision has yet been made. There are many details in the proposal, including an application procedure, eligibility requirements, the criteria an advisor must meet and demonstrate, and a review process.

Again, although a proposal has been developed, it has not yet been approved. Want more information? Please do not hesitate to contact your Advising Manager, a work group member, or me.

MTSU FACT: MTSU is the only university in this state with a dairy on or near campus.

Quest 2025

By Dr. Rick Sluder

The original Quest for Student Success was launched in 2013 and, since then, incredible progress has been made on virtually every student success outcome measure. Over the past two years, extensive work has occurred to shape and form Quest 2025, MTSU's guide to continue our student success initiative. More information is available **here**. After considerable discussion, five strategic priorities have been identified. They are (in abbreviated form) as follows:

1. Invest in a comprehensive faculty development plan to support the development of creative curricula including high impact practices.
2. Eliminate achievement gaps and increase the diversity of faculty and staff.
3. Increase online, hybrid and off-site cohort offerings, adaptive scheduling, and curricular flexibility.
4. Create and support a culture of service through all divisions of the University.
5. Invest in a campus-wide environment that fosters living-learning opportunities.

ADVISOR TARGETED TRAINING

This newsletter brought to you by the Advisor Training Committee.

If you would like to contribute to an advisor training event or to our next issue, please contact one of the committee members: Bryanna Licciardi (chair), Tamika Mitchell, James Wicks, and Janaé Daniels.

This issue and all previous issues of the Advisor Training Newsletter can be found at www.mtsu.edu/academic-advising/.