

THE REACH TO DISTINCTION

ACADEMIC MASTER PLAN MIDPOINT HIGHLIGHTS

WE NEED TO LEARN TO SET
OUR COURSE BY THE STARS,
NOT BY THE LIGHTS
OF EVERY PASSING SHIP
OMAR N. BRADLEY



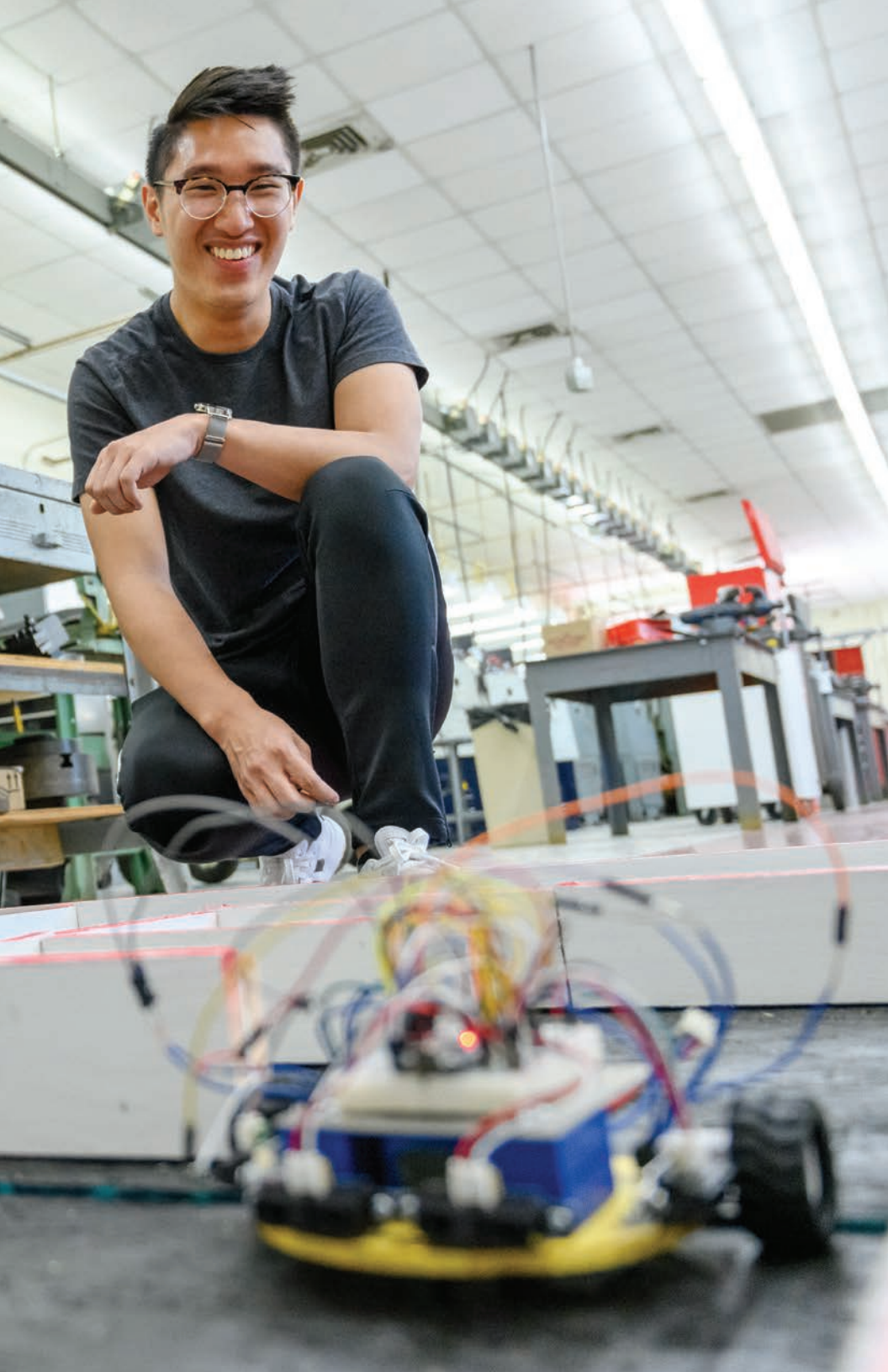
REACHING TO DISTINCTION

A Message from President Sidney A. McPhee and Provost Mark Byrnes

2020 marks the midpoint of *The Reach to Distinction*, Middle Tennessee State University's Academic Master Plan for 2015–2025. We invite you to view our achievements thus far and track the plan's ongoing implementation.

The Reach to Distinction builds on the foundation laid by the 2007 *Blueprint for Excellence* Academic Master Plan for academic quality, student-centered learning, and mutually beneficial partnerships and outreach. In *The Reach to Distinction*, we move in three strategic directions to transform the University by promoting engagement, fostering academic community, and innovating for effectiveness and efficiency. All of our major University planning documents align with our academic master plan: the *Campus Master Plan* for buildings and landscapes; the *2015–2025 Strategic Plan* for student access and achievement, program quality, and financial resourcefulness; and the *Quest for Student Success 2025*, MTSU's guidebook for future student success initiatives.

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, and rooted in enhanced, distinguished programs and student success. Our accomplishments will be marked by purposeful, sustained partnering relationships and outreach and recognized for their educational impact on the economic and cultural landscape of the region and beyond.



Strategic Direction 1:

PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT

MTSU prepares all of its students for success in the classroom and for a future of lifelong learning, professional development, and civic engagement. Our diverse academic community:

- actively involves students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, and partners in University life and activities
- prepares students to complete their degree programs and empowers them to pursue their chosen careers and the jobs of the future
- produces students and alumni who love learning, commit themselves to ethical and responsible practices, think critically and communicate effectively, and thrive in collaborative working environments

POINTS of DISTINCTION



Cutting-edge labs and classrooms in new Behavioral and Health Sciences building (2020, above) and three-building Science Corridor of Innovation (2016)



National recognition for *Quest for Student Success* 2013–2016 and recent launch of *Quest 2025*



MT Engage program creating a culture for students to become actively engaged in their learning and reflect on experiences with an ePortfolio



MTSU Research magazine highlighting the impact of investigations and innovations by faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates



Strategic Direction 2:

FOSTER ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

The University has taken important steps to foster academic community. Drawing upon current academic strengths, our faculty have developed new programs in emerging and interdisciplinary fields. MTSU has increased its investment in creating and sharing knowledge by fostering relationships among faculty, students, staff, alumni, communities, and partners.

MTSU continues to embrace diversity in its academic community because diversity and the free exchange of ideas are necessary to:

- create new knowledge
- advance excellence in academic programs, scholarship, and the arts
- promote meaningful academic, civic, and professional engagement

POINTS of DISTINCTION



Data Science Institute and degree launched for age of analytics, along with other innovative, in-demand programs



21 Fulbright fellowships and additional prestigious scholarships awarded recently for students to teach or research abroad



Grammy university partnership as only 10th affiliate using Grammy Museum as a research resource and teaching tool



Former Tennessee House Speaker Beth Harwell (r) appointed as Distinguished Visiting Professor in 2019



Strategic Direction 3:

INNOVATE FOR EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

A fully engaged academic community calls for enhanced communication processes, informational resources, and infrastructure as well as ongoing assessments of the University's strengths and receptiveness to opportunities that arise in the public and private sectors.

The University continuously works to create:

- an academic and student service infrastructure that stretches from admission through and beyond graduation
- partnerships with business, industry, and nonprofit organizations
- a welcoming, inclusive campus for all University publics

POINTS of DISTINCTION



Delta Air Lines partnership as one of only eight universities providing professional pilots in Propel pathway



Passport Office opened in on-campus Post Office to provide full services to students, staff, and community



MTSU Police accreditation among just 75 college departments and 706 overall law enforcement agencies nationally



Enhanced campus entry with completed Middle Tennessee Boulevard city project and planned commercial district



PANDEMIC RESPONSE

MTSU's response to the pandemic has been guided by the University's mission and commitment to the health and well-being of students, faculty and staff, and our communities. From the beginning of the crisis, President Sidney A. McPhee provided regular updates to the University community that were clear, transparent, and timely. In his charge to the MTSU COVID-19 task force, the president noted the importance of wise short-term actions to address the immediate crisis and called the task force's efforts an opportunity to continue positioning the University for the future.

Promote engagement

Connection Point pivoted to online programming to combat pandemic-induced social isolation, engaging students through social media and live-streamed events such as "Netflix and Learn" and Strava fitness challenges. Connection Point offers welcome week and year-round campus activities to especially engage new freshmen, with a follow-up system to ensure students get involved to boost college success.

Foster academic community

Scholars Week Expo went virtual to celebrate student researchers, creators, and their faculty mentors with panel and poster presentations and awards. Despite having to transition away from labs, studios, and other campus research facilities, more than 140 undergraduate and graduate students persevered to showcase their work in one of the most eagerly anticipated events each spring.

Innovate for effectiveness and efficiency

Faculty transferred 3,000+ classes from in-person to remote delivery in only days as the COVID-19 pandemic tested the University's capacity for innovation, effectiveness, and efficiency. Staff from MTSU Online and the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center learning design expertise with faculty. The Information Technology Division secured access to Zoom videoconferencing; met skyrocketing demand for technical support; and distributed Chromebooks and wireless T-Mobile hotspots to students and faculty who needed them.

POINTS of DISTINCTION



3D-printed face shields created by Art faculty and the Walker Library Makerspace protected frontline health care workers during COVID-19



MTSU Creamery donated milk produced from the laboratory dairy farm to local schools' food relief during the shutdown

I AM *true*
BLUETM

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