

The Reach to Distinction: Academic Master Plan 2015-2025

Implementation Overview for

July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024

<https://www.mtsu.edu/amp/>

Goals: Quality, Student-Centeredness, and Partnerships/Outreach

Strategic Direction 1: Promote Engagement

Objective: Implement aggressively the Quest for Student Success

Implement and monitor implementation of Quest for Student Success.

- Vice Provost for Student Success and Dean, University College Dr. Richard Sluder presented an [annual update webinar](#) on April 25.
- Strategic Priority 1 Academic Affairs workgroup prepared a plan for a redesigned LT&ITC.
- Strategic Priority 3 University Registrar led MTSU's participation in AASCU's Academic Planning for Equitable Student Success project. Industry leader Ad Astra provided consulting services for a project cohort of institutions to study course scheduling infrastructure. Results will be available in Fall 2024.
- Strategic Priority #4 created "[Kudos](#)," an online option for members of the MTSU community to recognize another faculty, staff, or student.
- Strategic Priority 5: Campus Planning and Student Affairs partnership explored P3 option for new campus housing.

Improve infrastructure to support increased employment opportunities for students.

- Career Development Center added questions to the Graduating Senior Survey to improve data collection.
- Third year of the CDC's Career Influencer recognitions identified 13 individuals across 6 colleges and the Division of Academic Affairs.

Objective: Achieve the goals of MT Engage

Develop and Implement SACSCOC QEP: MT Engage.

- MT Engage published its annual report at [2023-2024 MT Engage annual report](#), which listed 239 faculty in 8 colleges offered 226 different MT Engage-designated courses, with 14,701 (8,785 unique) students enrolled in 864 sections of those courses.

- MT Engage collaborated with ORSP and the Undergraduate Research Center on workshops about undergraduate research, a recognized high impact practice.
- MT Engage collaborated with LT&ITC on all-inclusive mentoring program calendar year 2024.

Expand EXL Program

- EXL continued to grow: 7,701 students participated in community projects, spending 464,942 hours in service work valued at \$13,407,643.

Create opportunities for students to participate in and benefit from all public programs held on campus and Develop and implement programs and services, e.g. communication and technology, to engage off-campus and online students in learning, scholarship, and service.

- Division of Marketing and Communications reorganization combined Event Productions and MTSU's public access television station into True Blue TV Event and Television Productions for increased effectiveness and efficiency in providing live, streaming, and on-demand access to public programming.

Objective: Sharpen focus on the internationalization of programs and partnerships.

- International Affairs annual impact report published at https://issuu.com/mtsumag/docs/2022_23iaimpactreport?ff&hideShareButton=false.
- Center for Chinese Music and Culture hosted Dr. Tan Ye (check on this), a specialist in Chinese literature, theatre, and film.
- Chinese Music Ensemble, led by Dr. Mei Han, performed in the Fall and Spring Terms and at the University of North Georgia-Dahlonoga. Chinese Music Ensemble member Will Childress, who is pursuing a master's degree in musicology, and biochemistry student Amy Brown performed at a special cultural event hosted by the Chinese Embassy to celebrate American students learning about the Chinese language and culture.

Objective: Create more interactive learning/living spaces across campus.

Facilities Master Plan

- Preparations for KOM renovation project to improve academic spaces and create more interactive spaces for faculty and students required moving numerous Computer Science, Mathematical Sciences, and University Studies faculty and staff to temporary quarters across multiple buildings. Their patience is much appreciated.

- Public-private partnership (P3) projects in development for a hotel (RFP issued) and student housing.

Provide all faculty members with consistent level of quality in support services

- Technology Access Fund supported new and replacement technology resources; key new technology resources included a concrete printer for the School of Concrete and Construction Management and eye tracking equipment and software for the College of Education.

Objective: Facilitate collaborations among and between faculty, alumni, community, friends, and business/nonprofit sectors

Academically centered department and college initiatives/activities/events

- MT-IGO grant supported production of “The Mousewife,” an interactive opera for young audiences, in collaboration with the Stones River Chamber Players.
- College of Media and Entertainment speaker event “What We Know For Sure About Elevating Success” shared Top 10 tips to help jumpstart and accelerate successful career journeys.
- Conferences held at or organized by MTSU included: Creative Writing Conference (MTSU Write); Southeastern STEM Education Research Conference (TSEC); 27th annual Tennessee Girls in STEM (CBAS); 59th Actuarial Research Conference (SOA, Mathematical Sciences); MTSU AI Initiative Research Conference; Tennessee Civic Summit (ADP); Positive Aging Conference (Nursing,); Association of Computing Machinery SIGMIS CPR Conference (Information Systems and Analytics).

Establish professional development programming for professionals in the community, i.e., accountants, teachers, health care, etc.

- Jennings A. Jones College of Business revitalized programming at its Executive Education Center <https://jones.mtsu.edu/execed/>.

Implement an Alumni Survey Program that ... provides timely information, and establishes a continuous feedback portal

- Alumni were important contributors to MTSU's mission review and strategic planning processes. Alumni accounted for 549 of 1,956 responses to Mission Review survey distributed by Alumni Relations. Alumni Relations staff also shared the 2025-2035 Strategic Plan SWOT Survey; 198 alumni responded. Several alumni serve as external members of Strategic Planning Pillar Committees.

Strategic Direction 2: Foster Academic Community

Objective: Develop innovative, interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs

Increase distinctive programs that compete national/internationally.

- MTSU faculty adapted existing programs to reflect disciplinary changes and create opportunities for students to focus their studies in distinctive ways by creating new credentials and creating 33 new concentrations within degree programs. New certificate and majors include Certificate in Concrete Industry Management, BS in Advertising and Public Relations, and BS and MS in Cybersecurity Management.

Increase undergraduate research/creative activities and experiential learning opportunities.

- The Undergraduate Research Center introduced the graduation distinction in undergraduate research.
- Twenty-eight MTSU students presented their research at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.
- MTSU Interior Design students presented at the ProGlobe "Impacts Around the Globe--Collaborative Student Research" virtual conference together with students from Canada, Germany, and Portugal.

Objective: Promote increased and sustained research, scholarship, and creative activity.

Invest in increased salaries for faculty and staff.

- At request of MTSU Board of Trustees, President McPhee appointed a merit pay plan study committee.

Create a Faculty Resources web site

- Faculty Senate and Academic Affairs began collaboration on guidelines for revising the Faculty Handbook.

Establish a Research/Outreach Forum/Lecture Series to showcase faculty and/or student scholarship activities.

- Raider Research Series, open to faculty, students, and staff provided monthly presentations spotlighting 10 faculty researchers from Agriculture, Anthropology, Biology, Chemistry, Geosciences, Information Systems and Analytics.

Develop interdisciplinary initiatives that build academic community on campus and between the campus and larger communities and provide dissemination of scholarship and artistic works to on-campus and broader community constituencies

- MTSU Initiative on Artificial Intelligence, spearheaded by the Data Science Institute, assembled AI champions to put MTSU faculty, staff, students, and community at the forefront of the AI revolution.

https://w1.mtsu.edu/datascience/institute/AI_Initiative.php.

Increase the number and value of stipends, assistantships, scholarships, and grants, and make these funds available year-round (include part-time students).

- Jones Chair of Excellence in Urban and Regional Planning instituted Scholars Program with stipend for selected students.

Advance academic quality and innovation in academic programs through use of discipline-specific best practices by faculty and students.

- The Casualty Actuarial Society recognized MTSU's Actuarial Science program with its Gold Level Recognition School designation, the highest honor through the CAS University Recognition Program, achieving the Gold Tier. This program recognizes academic institutions with a demonstrated commitment to preparing property and casualty actuaries through their educational offerings. The CAS is the world's only actuarial organization focused exclusively on property and casualty risks, serving over 10,000 members worldwide.

Implement an Innovative Modalities for Non-traditional Populations Plan.

- The University's Open Educational Resources initiative, housed in Walker Library, reported that OER saved students \$1.4M in textbook cost by June 2024. Students can identify OER courses when they register by the "Zero Textbook Cost" attribute in the course schedule.

Objective: Cultivate meaningful, reciprocal partnerships and public service programs.

Create a MT Partnership/Outreach Initiative (local and global) that emphasizes reciprocity as well as MTSU's economic contributions and impact across business and industry, the non-profit sector, True Blue, etc.

- Center for Health and Human Services secured largest grant in its history, almost \$3M, for expansion of medication-assisted treatment of substance abuse disorders 2023-2025.
- CCHS formed MTSU Office of Prevention Science and Recovery (OPSR) to engage Rutherford County stakeholders.

Work with companies that have international employees/clientele/visitors to share opportunities with the University

- Department of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures hosted "Global and Local Career Perspectives" panel with representatives from W Hotels and Mitsuchi Corporation.

Extend MTSU Arts ... to showcase student/faculty creative works to both campus community and broader communities

- Department of Art and Design continued to offer weekend programming for University and community audiences and expanded its community engagement to include a collaborative juried exhibition for Art and Design and the Visual Arts Group of the Rutherford Arts Alliance.

Objective: Invest in the professional development of faculty, students, and staff

Create recurring training session on systems, policies, and procedures, and provide access to systems.

- Human Resource Services offers training for departments regarding Banner Navigation and HR related processing, including regular monthly Hiring Verification Workflow processing and Electronic Personnel Action Form (EPAF) processing.
- ORSP initiated IRB Topics Monthly Discussion Series for faculty and students and Grant Writing Community Brunch bringing together current and future grant writers to have the opportunity to network and collaborate.

Objective: Recognize and celebrate achievement of excellence.

Revise tenure and promotion standards to recognize and reward innovation and academic quality in teaching, service, and research.

- Ongoing work by Academic Affairs workgroup to revise and update MTSU faculty appointment, tenure, and promotion policies.

Increase funding for non-instructional assignments.

- Academic Affairs and Faculty Senate review of budgetary resources led to doubling of NIA awards for AY 24-25.

Create a more effective marketing and communication plan to celebrate faculty /student/ staff accomplishments with multiple constituencies.

- Marketing and Communication's University and college publications, eRecord, Executive News Summary, and True Blue TV and Events provide continuous coverage of faculty, student, and staff accomplishments and track the dissemination of that coverage across platforms.

Strategic Direction 3: Innovate for Effectiveness and Efficiency

Objective: Encourage and support innovative programs and services.

Further internationalize the curriculum/bring global perspective to curriculum

- MT Open Press published Priya Ananth and Seok Jeng Jane Lim (editors), *Intercultural Engagement Through Short-Term Faculty-Led Study Abroad: A Practitioner's Guide with Multidisciplinary Perspectives from a Public University*, the second book published under the James E. Walker Library's MT Open Press imprint.

Expand course redesign initiative to all General Education courses.

- Faculty redesigned "legacy" general education courses to meet True Blue Core outcomes and obtain True Blue Core Committee approval, and began re/design of other courses for implementation in AY 24-25.

Promote interdisciplinary initiatives that build ties across the academic community to create and disseminate knowledge and artistic works.

- College of Liberal Arts distributed survey data from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) to departments with NASAD-accredited programs for their use in program improvement. SNAAP "gathers, analyzes, and reports on survey data from graduates of arts and design schools and colleges to understand the professional success, educational satisfaction, and personal fulfillment of arts alumni."

Revisit programs to assess role of required and/or elective courses.

- In response to changes in federal financial aid regarding required minors, University Registrar collaborated with departments to review options for required and optional minors within undergraduate degree programs.

Expand Honors opportunities identified in Honors College Master Plan.

- University Honors College celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a special History of the Honors College lecture series <https://w1.mtsu.edu/honors/lecture-series/images/Fall-2023-Honors-Lecture-Series-Flyer.pdf> , webpage <https://honors.mtsu.edu/history/>, and other special events.
- University Honors College expanded Buchanan Fellows to include transfer students.
- University Honors College revamped its minors to maintain access to Honors within updated major/minor program structures.

Objective: Partner with business, industry, and nonprofit organizations to respond to their unique educational needs and the economic development of the region

Develop a focused and distinctive Partnership initiative to hallmark MTSU's distinctive strengths and in innovation and economic development within and outside the region.

- Supply Chain Management hosted MTSU MidSouth Supply Chain Summit keynoted by Geodis CEO that brought students and faculty together with industry professionals and other experts.
- University Advancement corporate engagements supported experiential learning, capstone, and integrated service learning opportunities as well as internships and workforce development initiatives; focused on strengthening relationships with Middle Tennessee area Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development agencies.

Objective: Promote communication, transparency, and accountability

Improve/advertise / increase learning opportunities available to students

- Academic Affairs, Information Technology, and Marketing and Communications divisions collaborated with faculty to launch new MTSU website with 300+ new pages for majors, concentrations, and certificates designed for access on any device and for search optimization.

Objective: Create more flexible administrative processes

Move all processing paperwork to electronic format.

- Business and Finance implemented Chrome River travel authorization and approval software.

Objective: Promote efficiencies in operations and processes

- President McPhee and Provost Byrnes reorganized the Divisions of Academic and Student Affairs. A successful search brought Dr. Khalilah Doss as Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students. Dr. Laurie Witherow moved to Academic Affairs with Admissions, Enrollment Technical Services, Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Families Center, and New Student and Family Programs.