

The Reach to Distinction:

Academic Master Plan 2015-2025

Implementation Overview for
June 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025

<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.

- Dr. Richard Sluder, Vice Provost for Student Success and Dean, University College presented the Quest's final [annual update webinar](#) on May 2, 2025.
- [Strategic Priority 1](#)
 - Successful search for full-time Director of the Center for Teaching and Mentoring, formerly Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center.
- [Strategic Priority 2](#)
 - Office of Student Care and Conduct implemented [MTSU Care Team](#).
- [Strategic Priority 3](#)
 - Expanded use of Open Educational Resources ([Zero Textbook Cost](#)) in courses, saving students \$2,734,200 since 2022.
- [Strategic Priority 4](#)
 - Initiated Welcome Committee to orient new staff and faculty at MTSU.
- [Strategic Priority 5](#)
 - Renovations underway in Kirksey Old Main and Rutledge Hall; scheduled opening Summer 2026.
 - New student housing and Campus Master Plan in development.

Revisit admissions criteria.

- Admissions and Standards Committee approved a rotation for evaluating advanced credit exams, and a process for approving new advanced standing credit proposals.

Improve infrastructure to support increased employment opportunities for students.

- Career Development Center's [Big Career Fair](#) was the largest yet with 235 employer partners.
- The Career Development Center created the [career leadership digital badge](#)
- College of Liberal Arts created the interdisciplinary [Career Readiness minor](#).
- Quality Enhancement Plan development process for SACSCOC accreditation led to adoption of Career Readiness topic. FALL 2025 UPDATE: SACSCOC moved QEP into a "period of study;" MTSU shifted QEP plans to Strategic Plan 2035 for implementation.

Objective: Achieve the goals of MT Engage

Expand EXL Program

- Continued growth of EXL program, with 433 faculty offering 1,202 course sections in 63 departments across 9 colleges.
- EXL courses enrolled 19,601 students and 202 students earned the EXL Scholar designation.
- EXL's service learning had a community impact valued at \$16,681,909.

Develop co-curricular programs for freshmen, sophomores, and individual majors.

- MT Engage Week co-curricular events open to all students, such as:
 - Career Fair Ready! Workshop
 - EngageFest music festival
 - Artful Wellness: Transforming Mental Health Through the Arts
 - Engage IRL Nostalgic Field Day
 - Nerd Night!

Create opportunities for students to participate in and benefit from all public programs held on campus.

- VP Student Affairs and Dean of Students reduced costs for student organizations needing campus event space by paying from student fees rather than from individual student organization budgets

Develop and implement programs and services, e.g., communication and technology, to engage off-campus and online students in learning, scholarship, and service.

- [Undergraduate Research Center](#) (URC) website published [Student Research Guide](#) and [URC Research Groups and Lab Directory](#) as well as [Faculty Mentor Profiles](#).
- Student Organization for the Advancement of Research (SOAR) members presented (virtually) for the first time at the 11th annual International Conference of Undergraduate Research.

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

- President McPhee signed agreement with the Deputy Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas to create summer immersion program on MTSU campus and open pipeline for Bahamian students to enroll in MTSU Aerospace program.
- MTSU began exploring an international dual enrollment initiative.
- International Affairs [annual impact](#) report noted the following:
 - increased international student enrollment from 529 in Fall 2020 to 663 in Fall 2024.
 - increased participation by MTSU students in Education Abroad programs.
 - expanded engagement and enrollment from sub-Saharan Africa.
 - successful performance in Beijing by MTSU's Chinese Music Ensemble.

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

Implement Facilities Master Plan

- Applied Engineering Building completed on time for AY 25-26.
- Kirksey Old Main and Rutledge Hall renovations continued on schedule for summer 2026 completion.
- P3 (public-private partnership) hotel developer selected.
- RFP for P3 student housing issued.
- Capital Outlay submittals for additional Aerospace Shelbyville and CLAHB under new THEC/state process.

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

- Technology Access Fees approved multiple improvements, including:
 - Smart classrooms for Departments of Economics and Finance, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Recording Industry, and AMG 210 for College of Behavioral and Health Sciences programs.

- software packages for the Adaptive Technology Center operated by the Disability and Access Center.
- discipline-specific equipment for the School of Agriculture, Departments of Aerospace, Educational Leadership, Media Arts, Recording Industry, and Information Systems and Analytics, and multiple graduate programs in the College of Behavioral and Health Sciences.

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

Create an Alumni/Community initiative for alumni/friends/community

- Annual Alumni Spring Showcase April 9-19, 2025, featured events on and off campus, such as MTSU Campus Geology Field Trip and MTSU Alumni Family Night at Discovery Center, as well as virtual events such as Career Networking 1010 webinar.
- Office of Student Organizations and Service connected students with multiple nonprofit organizations such as Greenhouse Ministries, United Way, VA Tennessee Valley Healthcare System through its annual Volunteer Fair and Habitat for Humanity Build.

Academically centered department and college initiatives/activities/events

- In addition to continuing work of the Community Engagement Advisory Group, the Community Engagement Classification Council formed with expanded membership from previous year's community engaged pedagogy and scholarship workgroups. Members offered two faculty workshops and brought Dr. Emily Janke to speak and meet with faculty and community.
- New or returning conferences held at or organized by MTSU included Tech Vision uniting industry, faculty, and students as well as the biennial Holocaust Studies Conference, TN Collegiate Honors Council Conference, Middle TN Psychological Association Conference, Literacy Research Conference.
- All-Inclusive Mentoring Program launched in collaboration with LT&ITC (now Center for Teaching and Mentoring).

Establish professional development programming for professionals in the community

- Data Science Institute provided workshops for local non-profit organizations in partnership with the Christy-Houston Foundation.
- 2nd annual Grant Community Networking Brunch brought together community organizations with faculty and ORSP staff to network and collaborate.

Strategic Direction 2: Foster Academic Community

Objective: Develop innovative, interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs

Increase distinctive programs that compete national/internationally.

- MTSU faculty created and earned approval for the MS in Digital Media, the MS in Biomedical Sciences, and the MS in Legal Studies. MS in Legal Studies will be implemented in collaboration with the Nashville School of Law.

Increase undergraduate research/creative activities and experiential learning opportunities.

- Undergraduate Research Distinction digital badge created to recognize students who have achieved excellence in undergraduate research or creative activity through active engagement, mentorship, and a scholarly or artistic contribution to their academic discipline.
- Twenty-eight MTSU students presented their research at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research.

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

Invest in increased salaries for faculty and staff.

- The Board of Trustees approved President McPhee's recommendation for a 1.8% cost-of-living salary increase or \$750, whichever was greater, for all full-time and benefitted part-time employees.
- Performance plan options submitted to President.

Create a Faculty Resources website.

- ORSP website provides [guidance on executive orders](#).
- Participant in Academic Affairs Faculty Leadership Development Institute updated online [Faculty Handbook](#).

Enhance support for faculty and student research and creative activity by providing facilities, funding for travel, and time for research.

- Implementation of revamped [MT-IGO](#) for college-level grants for faculty.
- Undergraduate Research Center gained THEC center approval.
- ORSP provision of free Hanover Research Services to faculty to support grant efforts.
- Undergraduate Research Center gained THEC center approval.
- Data Science Institute seed grant program fostered data-driven research in three areas:

1. Data Science Research: Innovations in data science techniques, algorithms, and methods;
2. Interdisciplinary Research Using Data Science: Projects that apply data science to solve a problem or question in a discipline;
3. Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues of Data Science: Projects that explore the ethical, legal, and social issues in data science.

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

- Documented in annual cycle of self-studies and reviewer reports for THEC Quality Assurance Funding.
 - External program reviews
 - BA/BS Political Science
 - BA/BS International Relations
 - BS Data Science
 - BS Integrated Studies
 - MA History
 - MA Sociology
 - MCJ Criminal Justice Administration
 - MS Horse Science
 - Programmatic/Specialized accreditation reviews
 - ABET-CAC BBA Information Systems and Analytics, BS Computer Science
 - ABET-EAC BS Mechatronics Engineering
 - ABET-ETAC BS Engineering Technology
 - NASAD: BA/BFA/BS programs in Department of Art and Design, BS Animation, BS Interior Architecture, BFA Photography

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.

- Department of Art and Design BFA student facilitated collaboration on community mural art project workshops for Rutherford County youth and adults; Department collaborated with Rutherford Arts Alliance on Todd Art Gallery exhibition.
- Albert Gore Sr. Research Center and Department of Art and Design collaboration on exhibition of art and history political campaign communication and public program with panel discussion featuring distinguished visiting professor and former Tennessee House Speaker Dr. Beth Harwell and former chiefs of staff for Tennessee Representatives Bart Gordon and Jim Cooper and Tennessee Senator William Frist.

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

Outreach initiatives (local and global) that emphasize reciprocity as well as MTSU's economic contributions and impact across business and industry, the non-profit sector

- Ongoing work of Assistant to the President for Community Engagement and work of Community Engagement Advisory Group.
- Community Engagement Classification Council formed. Members offered two faculty workshops and brought Dr. Emily Janke to speak and meet with faculty and community.

Develop and implement a comprehensive student internship program across the colleges.

- Continued use of Handshake platform at Career Development Center and program/department/college specific initiatives.
- Comprehensive internship program an action item in Strategic Plan 2035.

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" with representatives from Nexus Circular LLC and Consulate-General of Japan.

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

- MT Imagine Animation Studio, collaborative effort of Animation, Audio Production, Video and Film, and Photography faculty and students, submitted its first production to film festivals.

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

Implement "Service" training and development for all MTSU employees

- Community Engagement Advisory Group subcommittee for campus workforce implemented "[Get to Know Your MTSU](#)" informational series.
- Academic Affairs accepted applications for the first staff professional development institute.

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

- Office of Human Resources began planning for transition to True Blue Fusion (Oracle).
- HR created monthly new employee/supervisor orientations.

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.

- In collaboration with Faculty Senate, Provost's Office doubled number of competitive faculty non-instructional assignment awards.

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

- Implementation of new website platform completed.
- 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.

Expand supplemental instruction initiative.

- Office of Student Success-faculty collaboration on pilot Learning Assistant program.

Expand course redesign initiative to all General Education courses.

- True Blue Core (redesigned general education program) implemented.

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

- The Margaret H. Ordoubadian University Writing Center, sponsored the inaugural CompExpo Conference, an on-campus event for interdisciplinary writing pedagogy.

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

- Ongoing review of prerequisite courses by faculty with support of University Registrar and Vice Provost for Academic Programs.

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 innovation and economic development within and outside the region.

- See Tech Vision conference above.

Objective: Promote communication, transparency, and accountability

Improve/advertise/increase learning opportunities available to students

- Academic Affairs, ITD, and Marketing and Communication divisions collaborated to complete implementation of new website.
- MTSU True Blue Wellness Crew (formerly the Exercise is Medicine® Committee) hosted free Wellness Fair based on the 8-dimension model of wellness (emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual) that provided students with over 30 organizations/vendors who are resources to the MTSU Community in these areas of Wellness.
- CLA Artful Wellness event connected students with community resources on art, music, drama, and play, as well as a representative from MTSU's Writing Center.

Create and implement "better customer service" initiative across the University.

- University Provost and vice provosts held two Academic Affairs open forums about initiatives, goals, and opportunities.

Objective: Create more flexible administrative processes

Review, update and/or streamline operational processes/procedures.

Move all processing paperwork to electronic format.

and

Objective: Enhance informational, physical, and technological infrastructure

and

Objective: Promote efficiencies in operations and processes

- Information Technology Division and Division of Business and Finance preparation for transition from Banner Finance and Banner HR to True Blue Fusion (Oracle).
- Academic Affairs collaborated with ITD to create new reporting features in Pipeline to aid in tracking Attendance Reporting, Mid-Term Grading, and Final Grading for faculty and departments and streamlined reporting requirements.