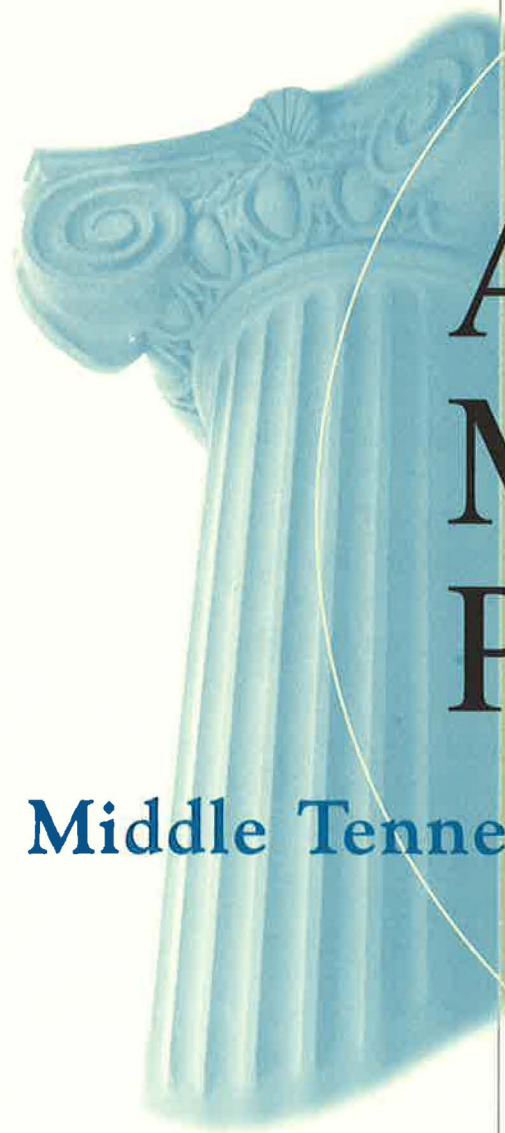


1997-2011



Academic Master Plan

Middle Tennessee State University

Middle Tennessee State University, an emerging major institution of higher learning in the state, region, and nation, is a member of the State University and Community College System of Tennessee and is governed by the Tennessee Board of Regents. As a comprehensive university, it offers an extensive range of programs primarily serving students of central Tennessee while also attracting students nationally and internationally. The University provides quality educational programs in a supportive campus environment. An increasing emphasis on scholarship reflects a commitment to research and public service, activities which expand human knowledge and enhance the quality of life.

— *Excerpt from MTSU's Statement of Mission*



Academic Master Plan

Middle Tennessee State University

Middle Tennessee State University reaches for the 21st century with excitement and purpose. The past fifteen years have witnessed extraordinary growth in enrollment and significant expansion in the University's faculty and academic programs. This growth and expansion are clear responses to the rapidly changing needs of the region. The next fifteen years promise to be dynamic ones for middle Tennessee and for higher education. As a major provider of educational programs and services, Middle Tennessee State University is challenged to assume a leadership role and help the region fulfill its promise.

Recognizing this challenge, President James E. Walker convened a Task Force in September 1996 of faculty, students, administrators, alumni, area business and professional leaders, and representatives of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the Tennessee Board of Regents. He charged the Task Force to develop an Academic Master Plan that would chart a bold course for the University for the next fifteen years. Guided by Dr. Robert Shirley, an expert in strategic planning in higher education, the Task Force reviewed the University's approved mission, recognized its strengths, and immersed itself in the plans and aspirations of six colleges, thirty-five departments, and almost a thousand full-time and adjunct faculty. The Task Force also considered the demographic and economic projections for the middle Tennessee region and discussed the outlook for higher education, including the goals and plans of the Tennessee Board of Regents and the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.



Traditions and Strengths

Middle Tennessee State University's strengths as an educational institution have developed over nearly a century of commitment to excellence in teaching, research, and service to the region. Its 70,000 graduates are an impressive measure of the University's success. They have distinguished themselves as professionals and leaders—one becoming a Nobel laureate. They have made proud contributions to the economic and cultural development of Tennessee. Today, over half of the college-bound students in the mid-state region select Middle Tennessee State University for their studies. Early in the next century the University expects to enroll over 20,000 students annually—and to be the second-largest university in Tennessee.

Middle Tennessee State University's exciting growth in recent years has been deliberately managed to increase student, faculty, and pro-

gram quality. Rising admission standards and targeted recruitment strategies have increased the diversity and academic preparation of the student population. ACT scores of students entering the University now exceed state and national averages. Growth has also provided opportunities to enhance the competencies and expertise of faculty. Over half of the 720 full time faculty have joined the University in the past decade. Their energies and interests are reshaping the academic curriculum and transforming the learning environment.

Exploding enrollments have also produced a construction boom—as the University races to catch up with student growth. New facilities are state-of-the-art and specially designed to meet changing program needs. The infrastructure of the campus boasts a network that creates a computer culture and provides an electronic link to the information highway.

Growth and Change

Dynamic population and economic growth is projected for the middle Tennessee region that has traditionally comprised the University's service territories. The region—Nashville and surrounding counties—is anticipated to exhibit strong employment demands across a range of industries and occupations as it becomes a full participant in national and global economies. Because it is tied so strongly to the region, Middle Tennessee State University must be prepared to respond in ways that will support and foster effective growth.

Higher education is also changing—across the nation and Tennessee. The student population over the next 15 years will become more diverse and multicultural. Increasing skill requirements


in the workplace will bolster the demand for higher education and promote continuous learning. Employers and their employees will expect custom-designed programs offered just-in-time and at convenient sites. The higher education marketplace will become more complex and competitive. Specialized suppliers will target niches traditionally served by colleges and universities. Emphasis will shift from a teaching to an interactive learning environment. Technology will create new connections to campus and improve access to information sources. Pressed to be more creative and flexible, public higher education is also predicted to face funding uncertainties. Taxpayer dollars will likely finance a shrinking portion of costs while demands for accountability are projected to rise dramatically. To fulfill its mission, Middle Tennessee State University must be prepared to pursue new funding sources and partnerships that will complement its strengths and improve the effective delivery of its services.

Considering the demographic and economic projections for the region and weighing the University's strengths and aspirations, the Task Force identified three major goals that must be central to decision-making during the next 15 years. These goals when targeted, pursued, and realized will provide critical support to the region's development and transform the University's academic programs. These goals form the core of the Academic Master Plan.

1 *Middle Tennessee State University will aggressively pursue academic initiatives in areas of competitive advantage—where its unique strengths intersect with the region's growth opportunities.*

2 *Middle Tennessee State University will deepen excellence in its academic core and target continuous improvement of its undergraduate and graduate programs.*

3 *Middle Tennessee State University will create a student-centered learning environment responsive to the needs of a diverse student population and accountable to citizens and taxpayers.*



The Plan proposes strategies to achieve these goals by 2010. Some strategies represent mature proposals and can be implemented immediately. Others require further focused study or the identification of supporting resources before implementation. The Plan, strategies, and the calendar for implementation will require monitoring and periodic revision to complement the changing demands of the region.

Goal

1

Pursue initiatives in area of competitive advantage.

The growth of the middle Tennessee economy has broadened opportunities and reshaped a region already rich in culture. Wedded to the region by geography and shared interests, Middle Tennessee State University has experienced a similar pattern of growth in enrollment and expansion in academic programs. Acknowledging its unique ties to the area, the University commits itself to focused strategic planning that will permit it to respond to the changing needs of the region.

New programming initiatives in the next 15 years will target areas of competitive advantage. These areas are applied science and technologies; commerce and agribusiness; education; entertainment, communication, and the arts; health and human services; information and computer technologies; law and government; and tourism and leisure.

These areas exist where the University's strengths intersect with the region's projected needs. These strengths are both general and program specific. As the largest university in the region, Middle Tennessee State University has the range of budgetary and human resources to address and successfully develop new academic initiatives. Further, growth has also produced a breadth of academic programming expected from a major comprehensive university. These offerings, which have acknowledged quality, provide specialized expertise and a well developed structure to support new initiatives.

To build on its strengths and to seize these growth opportunities, the University will form partnerships with professionals and practitioners in each area of competitive advantage. These partnerships will identify industry-specific employment needs and propose new educational programs to address them. The partnerships are intended to be permanent arrangements, providing assessment of programs and yielding hands-on experiences that will add value to traditional academic study.

APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGIES

Projections for the next decade indicate that applied science and technology graduates will enjoy strong employment demands. Annual job openings in 2005 are estimated at over 1,600 in Tennessee alone and are spread over a broad range of industries. New career opportunities are developing rapidly as the information age reduces the time between scientific discovery and technical application.

Middle Tennessee State University's science students are encouraged to work outside conventional boundaries and to pursue their curiosities about the

world. They adopt interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving. Graduates excel in teaching, manufacturing, forensic analysis, research, and medicine. Some are working to develop new self-assembling polymers and optical interfaces for telecommunications. Graduates from an interdisciplinary environmental program address issues of energy resource and waste management. Physics students are working with industry to blend instruction with real world experiences. Customized programs such as concrete management technology are the joint design of University faculty and industry professionals.

COMMERCE AND AGRIBUSINESS

Healthy employment growth is projected for the middle Tennessee economy. As a gateway to expanding southeastern markets, this region will continue to be an important distribution hub and manufacturing center. A burgeoning economy will produce new employment opportunities in manufacturing and services as well as provide fertile ground for a broad range of entrepreneurial activities. These opportunities will increasingly require employers and employees to invest in continuous education to remain competitive.

Middle Tennessee State University has a long history of producing leaders and professionals for the region's business sector. Accredited business and industry programs are supported by educational facilities designed to meet the demands of middle Tennessee and the global marketplace. Endowed chairs in Finance, Insurance, Free Enterprise, and Manufacturing enrich academic offerings and provide special links to important industries. The Business and Economic Research Center (BERC) is recognized as the major repository of information about the middle Tennessee economy. Three respected publications—*Midstate Economic Indicators*, *Tennessee's Business*, and *Global Commerce*—take the economic pulse of the region and explore issues of international trade and investment connections. The BERC and the Tennessee Small Business Development Center offer valuable consulting support for area businesses and entrepreneurs.

Agribusiness and agriscience also offer challenging career opportunities in the next decade. These range from horticulture and turf management to food production technologies designed to improve nutrition. A \$20 million gift to the University will add an outstanding show arena to the equine studies program. New Chairs of Excellence in Equine Health and Equine Reproductive Physiology will complement this program, enhancing its national reputation.

EDUCATION

The projected need for new teachers in middle Tennessee over the next 15 years is significant and sobering. In the state, almost 30 percent of the K-12 teachers are expected to retire as the century turns. These teachers must be replaced and additional teachers produced to address the demands that population growth will place on the region's educational systems. New teachers, along with the more experienced teaching force, will require continuing training to master the developing technologies that are reshaping the state's K-12 classrooms.

Founded as a normal school, Middle Tennessee State University is today the home of the state's largest teacher-preparation program. Consistent with its commitment to the principles of the Renaissance Group, the entire University assumes responsibility for the preparation of teachers. Extensive collaborative efforts within the University and vital partnerships with the region's school systems produce teachers prepared for 21st-century challenges. A special innovative program, The Leonardo Project, integrates several disciplines to produce a learning-centered approach to teacher preparation.

The University is particularly rich in resources that focus on the needs of special populations. Project Help addresses the needs of developmentally-delayed children and provides hands-on instruction for those anticipating teaching careers in this area. Other programs target the education of disabled children and those with communication disorders. The Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia evaluates the reading problems of students and prepares

teachers to recognize such needs in their students. The Center forecasts that by 2010, effective approaches to recognizing and treating dyslexia will be integrated into early childhood education programs for all schools in Tennessee.

The University has close ties to the region's school systems. Interactions with teachers and schools abound. Special workshops in aerospace, geography, math, and marketing education update participating teachers on developments in these disciplines. Instruction in technology and information access is provided by the Instructional Technology Support Center and the Center for Economic Education. During 1998, supported by a federal grant, Middle Tennessee State University will deliver specialized instruction to six rural classrooms via satellite uplink.

ENTERTAINMENT, COMMUNICATION, AND THE ARTS

Entertainment, communication, and the arts provide exciting employment prospects for middle Tennessee. Producing "Music City's" star power requires a constant influx of musical, business, and technical expertise. The region is also home to a well developed communications industry ranging from print journalism to television and video. Adding to the creative mix is the area's thriving arts industry. In 1996 the non-profit arts sector alone produced a \$56.6 million impact on the Nashville area economy and supported 2,000 jobs.

The growth of student demand for programs in these areas is dramatic. Middle Tennessee State University has established itself as a leader in electronic media, visual communication, recording industry, and music production. Career tracks are provided for aspiring performers, designers, managers, and technicians. A nationally recognized College of Mass Communication attracts students and industry professionals from across the country.

The Chair of Excellence in First Amendment Studies focuses on contemporary constitutional and legal

issues in the media. Programs in art and music provide a solid foundation for education in the visual and performing arts. Opportunities abound for student experiences in theatrical productions, opera workshops, student musical groups, and dance, art, and music education outreach programs. All contribute expertise to the Governor's School for the Arts held annually on the campus.



HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health and human service occupations are consistently ranked among the top ten in national and statewide employment growth opportunities. These opportunities are very visible in middle Tennessee which is home to major health-care delivery corporations and is a national leader in the health-care industry.

Middle Tennessee State University recognizes the growing academic potential in health and human services. Building on the strength of its life cycle programs, the University is well positioned to provide both child-care and aging-care education as well as

education relevant to life health issues. These wide-ranging opportunities extend to preventive, rehabilitative, recreational, and nutritional health; nursing, family, and social services; and health care marketing and management. The University has a tradition of providing clinical services to persons in the region. These services range from psychological and educational testing and counseling to health and wellness programs. They also include the MTSU Speech, Language and Hearing Clinic and the Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia. Strong internships and practicums provide hands-on learning experiences for students. The University also offers highly respected pre-professional programs for students planning careers in the medical profession.

The University, through the Chair of Excellence in Health Care Services and the National Health Care Chair in Nursing, has developed partnerships which provide the base for expanding programs and learning opportunities. In order to meet the increasing diversity of regional health care needs, Middle Tennessee State University must continue to develop programs that provide human services counseling and health care education.

INFORMATION AND COMPUTER TECHNOLOGIES

The demand for professionals who can design and maintain complex information systems for education, government, and industry accelerates each year. Projections indicate that the two fastest growing occupations for college graduates through the year 2005 are systems engineers and computer engineers. Graduates proficient as computer programmers or systems analysts are in high demand. The numbers of graduates who hold jobs in information management and related business fields are growing.

The development of advanced computer systems and their applications is at the core of a rich mix of academic programs. These programs prepare graduates for careers as varied as linguistics and language research and industrial control and robotics. Students studying digital animation prepare for careers in the

television and video graphics professions. Other students trained in digital computer technology vie for design and application jobs in the manufacturing, medical, or aerospace sectors. Interactive multimedia production skills are developed in several programs to address the exploding demand for these technical professionals.

LAW AND GOVERNMENT

An expanding economy and the significance of the area's government sector support the growth of career opportunities for those with legal and public policy skills. Employment projections indicate demands for lawyers and human resource and labor relations professionals. Healthy job prospects are also predicted for policy analysts and those prepared to provide management and support services to the criminal justice system.

Middle Tennessee State University has well established strengths in its pre-law, public administration, economics, and criminal justice programs. Students interested in legal or government careers can supplement classroom study through participation in the Model United Nations, the Mock Trial Program, and legislative internships. Legal, accounting, and counseling services have been requested by Rutherford and surrounding counties to address the severe shortage of legal aid services for low income and elderly residents.

The campus is also rich in special resources devoted to planning and policy analysis for the region. The newly established Chair of Excellence in Urban and Regional Planning will focus attention on the region's critical issues and foster a dialogue among the area's decision makers. The Albert Gore Research Center supports faculty and student research through the contributed papers and archival records of prominent regional policymakers. The growth of these entities should produce added recognition for the University as the repository of data and analysis on middle Tennessee.

TOURISM AND LEISURE

Middle Tennessee attracts millions of tourists each year who are drawn to the area because of its history, natural beauty, and entertainment attractions. Their numbers suggest that tourism and leisure are already big business in the region. Increased attractions and population growth in the southeast will generate additional opportunities for employment in the leisure and tourism industries.

Middle Tennessee State University is at the forefront in offering academic programs that recognize, preserve, celebrate, and market middle Tennessee's cultural history. Programs such as recording industry, historic preservation, public history, archaeology, and horse science prepare students to connect to careers that serve these industries. Nationally recognized expertise on southern folklore and folk music is located on the campus. The Centers for Historic Preservation and Popular Music focus on important regional assets and enrich the academic program. These resources are pivotal to preserving and disseminating an accurate historical and contemporary portrait of area culture. Whether the focus is native Indian communities, the long hunters, Civil War battles, or the birth of southern traditions, these programs represent educational, research, and developmental resources for the region.

Middle Tennessee is also noted for its recreational opportunities through its lakes, rivers, and parks. The University's programs in recreation and leisure, recreation management, and parks and resource management produce graduates who make marked contributions to the recreation industry.

Strategies

For each area of competitive advantage, Middle Tennessee State University will form a partnership with industry professionals and practitioners. These partnerships will assess industry demands and needs and propose programs designed to address them. The development of new programs will consider the broad range of academic resources in the University which may contribute to these new programs. The partnerships will present these proposals to the Provost no later than September 1999.

Middle Tennessee State University will create new departments, schools, and colleges where academic commonalities and organizational efficiencies support such restructuring. Proposals that deserve early consideration include a Department of Social Work, a College of Fine and Performing Arts, a College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, and a College of Health and Human Services.

Middle Tennessee State University will support new programs already proposed or in the final stages of development. Among others, these include a Master of Fine Arts in Entertainment Technology and a Ph.D. in Psychology with concentrations in clinical and health psychology. Several programs may be most effectively developed in consortia arrangements with other Tennessee colleges and universities. Middle Tennessee State University will propose a Master in Speech-Language Pathology by Spring 1998 to meet the certification requirements of high school teachers in speech communication.

Middle Tennessee State University will provide additional support for the Albert Gore and the Business and Economic Research Centers. Their holdings and activities are an important research resource for middle Tennessee and the state. Supporting these centers and other centers and chairs which focus their analyses on middle Tennessee will provide the region an important resource for informed decision-making.

Middle Tennessee State University will consider the development of units that will serve both the academic program and the community. Two proposals which should receive early attention are a Psychology Clinical/Consulting Center to serve the University's students and community residents and a Legal and Accounting Center to provide services to the low income population in Rutherford and contiguous counties.

Goal

2

Strengthen the academic core.

While regional growth creates demands and opportunities for new and expanded programs, Middle Tennessee State University simultaneously commits itself to strengthening its academic core and to improving quality in all of its offerings. This commitment to excellence encompasses Middle Tennessee State University's General Studies Program and each undergraduate and graduate major. Deepening quality in these programs requires investments in faculty, library, and instructional resources. This commitment also underscores the need for new and renovated facilities and demands the aggressive recruitment of a diverse and academically talented student population.

STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Middle Tennessee State University's focus on quality is incorporated in its recruitment strategies. The University is committed to attracting and retaining a student population which is diverse and of high academic promise. Today the campus is a mosaic reflecting significant age, racial, ethnic, and gender diversity that enriches its classrooms and student activities. These experiences are important to prepare graduates to interact effectively in diverse workplaces and a multicultural world. Rising academic quality is also changing the campus. The growing number of honors students improve the learning climate in all of the University's programs. Attracting and retaining these students require increasing scholarship and financial support and the provision of a collage of activities that sustain their broader intellectual and social interests.

Faculty are central to fine academic programs. Over the past decade Middle Tennessee State University has attracted a faculty well prepared to support established programs and energized to create new ones. Their intellectual growth and personal development produce the instructional energy and scholarly outputs that support high quality academic offerings. The University encourages faculty to incorporate new technologies into their teaching and to guide students' learning through research and creative activities. Middle Tennessee State University is committed to providing faculty development support, competitive salaries, and equitable workloads.

THE GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

The General Studies Program at Middle Tennessee State University is at the core of its educational mission. This curriculum, required of each student, provides an understanding of the humanities and fine arts, mathematics, and the natural and social sciences. It prepares students to make sound judgments and choose wisely among ethical, moral, and aesthetic values. These understandings are the hallmark of an educated person. The General Studies Program also develops critical thinking skills and produces the analytic muscle necessary for lifelong learning.

The University is proud of the accomplishments of its General Studies Program. Over the past decade, students completing these studies have consistently demonstrated critical thinking skills and understandings that rank them above the average on nationally normed examinations. During the 1996-97 academic year, the University undertook a thorough evaluation of its General Studies Program. Internal and external reviewers confirmed the accomplishments of the program and made recommendations for improvements. Middle Tennessee State University will strengthen its core curriculum by implementing the recommendations of its Task Force on General Studies. These proposals provide an excellent blueprint for improving the quality of this cornerstone program.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

Building on the strengths of its General Studies Program, Middle Tennessee State University has developed a full menu of undergraduate programs. Its nine undergraduate degrees boast 57 majors and 86 concentrations. Over the next decade these programs must adapt to the changing requirements of the industries and professions they serve. Students planning careers for the 21st-century workplace must be able to communicate effectively in oral, written, visual, and graphic forms. They must be able to define problems, integrate large amounts of information, and propose solutions. Deepening excellence will require that students become proficient in using research tools and making artistic applications in their chosen majors. Graduates should also possess multicultural and global understandings and skills that will enable them to participate effectively in international workplaces and the world community.

THE HONORS PROGRAM

The extraordinary growth of the Middle Tennessee State University Honors Program is evidence of the accelerating quality of its student population. For Fall 1997, one-third of entering freshmen qualified for the Honors Program. This program has great

appeal for high-ability students because it is structured to offer them unique educational opportunities. Honors students experience the learning environment of a small college within the walls of a major university. They have the opportunity to study subject material more deeply, guided by professors who are recognized campus-wide for their teaching and scholarly accomplishments. Particular attention is directed toward the development of individualized student research projects and senior theses.

Students in the University's Honors Program participate in special enrichment activities including faculty firesides. Many will choose to be part of the new Honors Living and Learning Residential Center. The program clearly adds value for its graduates who consistently qualify for acceptance into high profile graduate and professional schools.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Middle Tennessee State University boasts an impressive array of graduate offerings. The eleven graduate degrees provide more than 30 specialized majors including five doctoral programs. Increasingly, the region looks to the University for graduate programming to develop professional management skills and technical expertise. These programs must consider appropriate design and delivery systems for working professionals who are retooling to meet information-age demands.

Expanding program offerings and deepening excellence in all majors will require adjusted faculty teaching loads. Appropriate teaching loads are critical for graduate faculty who must make intellectual contributions and mentor increasing numbers of students. Middle Tennessee State University's commitment to quality will also require increased funding for graduate scholarships, assistantships, and other support resources.

THE LIBRARY AND IMPROVED FACILITIES

The library is the heart of the University and provides important support for all of its programs. An exciting new facility will house Middle Tennessee State University's library collection and provide access to a rich variety of remote electronic databases. Investments in the maintenance and expansion of these resources are critical to the quality of the academic program. Results produced by AMIGOS, a collection evaluation database, identify areas where library holdings must be expanded for programs to remain competitive with those at peer institutions.

While new structures dominate the landscape, several programs desperately need new or renovated facilities. An accreditation team praised Middle Tennessee State University's art program but withheld accreditation because of the substandard facilities. Concerns have also been raised by national review teams about the classroom and laboratory facilities housing the programs in biology, chemistry, and physics. New and renovated facilities must be a high priority of the University, not only to meet the expanding enrollments projected over the next 15 years but to adequately serve today's students. Equipment, technology, and instrumentation needs must be met not only for these programs but for technology intensive ones such as recording industry, radio-television/photography, engineering technology, aerospace, and others. The computer culture now transforming the campus must be maintained and extended to incorporate the increasing impact of information systems and networks on many academic programs and careers. Technology and instrumentation must encourage faculty and students to explore new ways of teaching and learning.

Strategies

Middle Tennessee State University commits to recruitment strategies that will attract and retain a diverse student population of high academic promise compatible with the University's goals. As part of this strategy, Middle Tennessee State University will leverage its financial resources and seek the support of private donors, foundations, and other private and public sources to provide aggressive scholarship support and financial aid for this student population.

By Fall 1998 Middle Tennessee State University will implement a cohesive system of faculty development activities and support. This system will provide training and released time to enhance faculty skills in the use of new technologies and interactive teaching strategies.

Middle Tennessee State University commits to recruitment and retention strategies that will increase the numbers and percentages of minority faculty. The success of these strategies will provide a more effective learning environment for the campus.

Effective Fall 1997 Middle Tennessee State University will move to implement the recommendations of the General Studies Task Force. A director of the General Studies Program will be appointed from the full-time faculty. A committee will be established to provide leadership for the University's General Studies Program, to evaluate its mission, structure, and effectiveness; and to recommend changes. The committee will also consider the development of an integrative capstone experience for the General Studies Program.

By Fall 1998 the University Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council will propose initiatives to improve communicating across the curriculum and to integrate multicultural and global topics into the University's academic offerings and experiences.

Middle Tennessee State University will deepen its support for applied research activities that strengthen the academic program and serve the region. A Task Force including representatives of the College of Graduate Studies, campus research committees,

and the Office of Sponsored Programs will submit specific goals and objectives to the Provost to implement this goal.

Middle Tennessee State University will strengthen and expand its college advising centers. By January 1998 the University will provide additional staff and resources to address the retention of students.

Middle Tennessee State University will recommend approval of an Honors College effective Fall 1998. Elevation to college status will recognize the Honors Program's size and importance to the campus. Further, this change in status will position the Honors Program to continue to attract students of outstanding academic promise.

Consistent with its five-year planning goals for 1995-2000, Middle Tennessee State University will continue to request that the University's five Doctor of Arts programs be redesigned as Ph.D. programs. This redesignation is consistent with academic actions across the nation and will improve the value of these programs to students and graduates.

Consistent with Middle Tennessee State University's commitment to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), by the year 2002 all faculty in the graduate classroom will teach appropriate academic loads. Also, by the year 2002 the University will meet the staffing requirements and recommendations of all specific program accreditation agencies.

Effective Fall 1998, Middle Tennessee State University will increase the number of graduate assistantships by at least five a year, targeting new and expanding programs. Increased graduate assistantships are critical to the achievement of high quality for the University's graduate program.

By May 1998 Middle Tennessee State University, with the help of consultants, will complete initial planning for new art and science facilities. Plans for funding these facilities will be achieved by June, 1999 with implementation to follow.

The University confirms its commitment to increase library funding and staffing on an FTE basis equal to that of peer institutions. Middle Tennessee State University further commits itself to continually expand and deepen access to information and research resources that will enable all of its programs to achieve high levels of quality.

Middle Tennessee State University will add a minimum of five new master classrooms a year until all classroom and laboratory spaces possess appropriate packages of instructional technologies. By 1999, Middle Tennessee State University will add two 21st-Century Classrooms to permit the preparation and retraining of teachers for Tennessee's K-12 systems. By 1998, the University will create additional sound and recording facilities for the Recording Industry Program. The University will invest a minimum of \$1,000,000 per year in computers, system expansion, new equipment, and instrumentation to support a broad range of academic programs.

Goal

3

Create a student-centered learning environment.

Higher education is changing at Middle Tennessee State University and across the nation. The focus is shifting from teaching to learning. Technology is redefining the boundaries of the classroom and reshaping student/teacher relationships. Limited funds and increasing competition require that Middle Tennessee State University deliver its services with a commitment to accountability and consumer satisfaction. These forces challenge Middle Tennessee State University to create a student-centered learning environment.

TECHNOLOGY AND INTERACTIVE LEARNING

This new environment recognizes and responds to the dramatic changes in the student population and their relationship to technology. James Duderstadt, president emeritus of the University of Michigan, characterizes these students as the “plug and play” generation. Such references acknowledge that many have grown up in environments rich in electronic and video experiences. These students prefer to learn through experimentation and respond positively to discovery learning approaches. These learning patterns require that the roles of faculty and students be redefined. Faculty will increasingly become mentors for students. Students will assume greater responsibility for their own learning. Both will participate in interactive strategies that expand learning beyond the classroom.

ACCESS AND DISTANCE LEARNING

This new environment must also provide increased access for many Tennessee citizens. To remain competitive Tennessee must increase the percentage of its population that is college educated. Today that percentage is below the national average and also below that of many other southeastern states. Geographic barriers or job and family commitments may limit the numbers who can pursue education in the traditional manner. To support the economic development of the region, Middle Tennessee State University currently employs a portfolio of distance learning approaches in partnership with community colleges and industrial sites. In Fall 1997 Middle Tennessee State University will offer four on-line courses via the Internet. These and other alternative delivery modes permit higher education to be offered “anytime, anywhere.” In addition to providing new access for many Tennesseans, distance learning will also support lifelong learning. Such learning is necessary to enable the region’s employees to compete effectively in the marketplace and add value to their professions and communities.

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Strategies

RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Traditional ways of doing business and delivering services need to be rethought as Middle Tennessee State University creates a student-centered learning environment. Some long-established practices and processes may limit interdisciplinary, cross-functional, and collaborative efforts on campus. These barriers must be recognized and removed to increase the value that University programs provide to students and employers. New flexibilities are required to support academic innovation and to permit Middle Tennessee State University to respond quickly and effectively to the needs of the region.

Middle Tennessee State University's learning environment will be accountable. As a publicly funded university, it understands its accountability to the taxpayers of Tennessee. The University further owes such accountability to its students who will increasingly fund a larger share of the costs of higher education. In a broader sense the University must also remain accountable to its alumni and other stakeholders who look to Middle Tennessee State University to provide education and leadership for the region.

Middle Tennessee State University will become more flexible and responsive. Effective Fall 1997 the University will convene a Task Force charged with reviewing established policies and procedures and identifying barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. Changes should enable Middle Tennessee State University to respond creatively where student demands do not match the structure of existing programs or established schedules. The Task Force will recommend flexibilities to support more seamless articulation with community and technical colleges and produce increased levels of satisfaction for Middle Tennessee State University's students and stakeholders. The Task Force will report its findings and recommendations by July 1, 1998.

Middle Tennessee State University will prove itself accountable. Middle Tennessee State University commits itself to the further development and implementation of an assessment system that clearly measures the quality of its students, faculty, programs, and graduates. As part of this system and consistent with the Tennessee Performance Funding System, the University will measure the accomplishments of its graduates each year against national standards and relevant benchmarks. Results from these comparisons will be used to modify curriculum and to target continuing improvement. Results will be reported annually.

Middle Tennessee State University will recruit and reward faculty who are effective in a learning environment. In staffing decisions and in pay, promotion, and retention decisions, Middle Tennessee State University will actively seek and support faculty who are committed to a collaborative and innovative learning environment, who are experienced in interacting with a diverse student body, and who are proficient in the use of technology.

By January 1998, Middle Tennessee State University will develop a five year plan for distance learning initiatives. The plan will consider appropriate partnerships and delivery technologies and modes. It will further propose pay and workload adjustments to effectively engage Middle Tennessee State University faculty in these activities.



Blueprint *for the Future*

The Academic Master Plan creates a strategic blueprint for the University's future. It builds on the vision of President James E. Walker and is the result of diligent work by a special Task Force. The Plan commits the University to an expanding role in the region's future and develops goals and strategies designed to help both middle Tennessee and the University fulfill their promise. That future—projected to be one of dynamic growth and change—requires the development of new programs and partnerships with industry and professional groups. These must identify new educational competencies and experiences that will produce competitive clout for the region. The University further commits itself to deepening excellence in all of its offerings and to producing graduates who will not only lead their professions but make a difference in their communities. Finally, Middle Tennessee State University will create a student-centered learning environment that incorporates new technologies and is accountable and responsive to the region's changing needs.

Much work remains to be done. Focused partnership planning over the next two years must produce specific program agendas and strategies for continuing productive involvement. Faculty must be trained to master new technologies and teaching strategies. New facilities must be constructed and configured to support education in art and the sciences. Student and faculty recruitment must produce a campus capable of achievement and renewal and reflective of the diversity that characterizes middle Tennessee's workplaces and the world community. The University will mobilize its human and financial resources to implement the Plan's strategies to reach its goals. It must creatively extend that reach through the development of new resources and relationships.

Middle Tennessee State University has grown through the past decade into a major university. It has managed rapid growth to produce higher levels of quality and service. Over these years the University has invested in change and welcomes the challenges the future will surely bring. Middle Tennessee State University reaches for that future with purpose, confident that the implementation of this Academic Master Plan will bring the future within its grasp.

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