The question: How to help MTSU educators become more aware of accessibility goals and resources on campus.

The answer: Melicent “Mel” Homan.

The reason: Someone who is part of the University’s faculty and earning a doctorate in school improvement is well-positioned to help reach this goal.

Homan began this semester dividing her time between teaching Communications Studies and Organizational Communication classes and working for the ITD Faculty Instructional Technology Center. She said her role as MTSU Accessibility Task Force Faculty Fellow for Spring and Summer 2017 is a temporary “bridge” until someone is hired fulltime.

While continuing to teach three classes, she will be having meetings and workshops with faculty to learn their challenges in providing accessibility and offer solutions.

Homan said her primary strategy for making classrooms more accessible is Universal Design for Learning.

“In a nutshell it means to provide your content in more ways than one, so it’s like a ‘plus-one’ mentality,” she said. “So if you are doing a lecture, you need to be able to provide a transcript of that lecture or videotape that lecture, so that someone who is perhaps deaf or has learning disabilities...”
Homan, continued from page 1

can go back and access that information in another way.

"It’s providing a variety of learning opportunities rather than just direct instruction, which we kind of tend to focus on in higher ed."

She wants to meet with teachers in departments experiencing higher failure rates, to help promote tools for disabled students to better access classroom materials.

Teachers should not be intimidated by accessibility requirements, Homan said. She said it is “easy to make content accessible,” partly due to technology available.

“It’s not as time-consuming as faculty might think, especially now,” Homan said. “I don’t really love technology, but you can make it your friend. It might be difficult in the beginning, but it makes your life so much easier. We’re just encouraging people not to be afraid of that moving forward.”

Desire2Learn (D2L) offers a good basic template that can be used with any subject matter to make it accessible.

Homan said she finds most faculty members have a desire to provide accessibility.

“I think that people are willing; they’re just not clear on the requirement and where we go from here. Most departments have had to make their syllabi accessible, but they don’t know what it means after that. I think educators want to help kids, and I don’t think they realize it also helps students that don’t have a documented disability.”

In her “free time,” she joked, Homan is currently completing a doctorate at MTSU in Assessment Learning and School Improvement.

“Life is so fun,” said the mom of two daughters.

A self-described “Army brat” who grew up in Bradley County, Tennessee, Homan has been at MTSU since 2009. A former K–5 substitute teacher, she moved to teaching at the college level at Northern Kentucky University during 1994–95 while finishing her graduate work there.

Now she’s come “almost full circle.”

“I consider Tennessee my home,” she said.

Barbara Draude, ITD assistant vice president, said the arrangement is a classic win-win scenario.

“The Accessibility Task Force has been working to develop a plan to help faculty and staff increase the accessibility of MTSU information,” Draude said.

Homan’s primary focus is reviewing the instructional resources already in place to “help position us for enhancing our support,” Draude said.

“Melicent brings a passion and excitement about helping students of all accessibility levels be successful. Her working with our instructional support staff will continue the campaign for increased awareness of universal design for learning and be an additional resource for faculty as they implement increased accessibility in their teaching.”

**Accessing Accessibility Help**

For help reaching accessibility goals, contact the FITC at mtsu.edu/fitc/fitc.php or 615-904-8189.

The TBR Accessibility Training Course is a very helpful resource.

Register for it and find other accessibility advice and resources—including Accessible D2L Page Templates—at mtsu.edu/fitc/accessibility.php.

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New telemanagement system will improve on-campus calling

Telecommunication Services recently completed a nearly year-long project to plan, design, and implement a new telemangement system.

Pinnacle, in partnership with Calero, is the leading communications lifecycle management solution for enterprises and is vital for the day-to-day operation of MTSU Telecommunication Services, serving many roles that allow the office to operate effectively.

These include:

Service Management: Keeps a concise record of all services provided by Telecommunication Services, including voice, data, wireless, and cable TV. Service records are extremely important not only for billing, but also for service order and incident management.

Service Desk Management: Allows for efficient service order and incident management, from assigning the proper technician groups to a task, to creating appropriate billing records based on services being requested.

Usage Management: Processes call detail records and rates calls based on call type in preparation for departmental billing.

Asset Management: Tracks all assets relative to the telephony infrastructure, including cable, pair, and port information, as well as inventory management for phones and other peripherals. Tracking assets creates efficiencies in warranty replacement and equipment reorders. Relative asset information is also displayed on service orders and incidents, providing technicians with the information needed to troubleshoot or make changes to an existing service.

Reporting: Provides real-time analytics from all areas, including service, service desk, usage, and assets.

Collectively, these roles allow Telecommunication Services to satisfy the telephony needs of the campus in the most effective and efficient manner. Pinnacle opens many doors, and this is especially important as we continue to implement the Skype for Business phone system.

Goal is to complete Skype For Business migration by this summer

Work continues to migrate Avaya telephone users campus-wide to Skype for Business.

To date, the project is roughly 50 percent complete, with a goal of completion by summer.

During January and February, the following buildings were migrated to the new telephone system:

• Alumni Memorial Gym
• Boutwell Dramatic Arts
• Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia
• Forrest Hall
• MTSU Blvd. Garage
• Holmes Parking Garage
• McFarland Building
• Project Help
• Science Building
• Soccer and Track Complex

Next on the list, and already in production, are the following:

• Bayer Travis Maintenance
• Central Utility Plant
• Hastings Maintenance Complex

• Haynes-Turner Maintenance
• Satellite Chiller Plant
• Holmes Parking Garage
• Student Services and Admissions Center
• Stark Agribusiness and Agriscience Center
• Floyd Stadium
• Student Union Building
• James Union Building
• James E. Walker Library
• Saunders Fine Arts
• Andrew L. Todd Hall
• Wright Music Building

For additional information on the Skype for Business project, including the remaining deployment schedule, visit mtsu.edu/itdtele/skype.php.

Learn basic or advanced Skype for Business in an ITD workshop.

For information on that and other spring workshops, click on the graphic at left.

Register Online for Spring ITD Workshops

- INTRODUCTION TO ARGOS (Budget and Student Reporting)
- CREATING ADA ACCESSIBLE CONTENT
- DISCUSSION BOARDS/GROUPS, RUBRICS & DROPBOX
- GRADEBOOK AND QUIZZES
- INTRODUCTION TO DESIRE2LEARN (D2L)
- LYNC FOR MAC
- SKYPE FOR BUSINESS (Basic and Advanced)
- TELEPHONE TRAINING
- OTHERS SCHEDULED ON REQUEST

For details on workshops and to register, visit www.mtsu.edu/itd/workshops.php
For Deena Cruz, saying that Middle Tennessee State University is “like family” is more than a cliché.

Cruz, a technical clerk in ITD’s Blue ID office, graduated from MTSU and is working toward a master’s degree now. She has two sons enrolled here, and even her 11-year-old daughter tags along for classes sometimes.

“I’ve been here since I came to college,” she said. Cruz started in 1988, left for a while, then came back and graduated in 1996 with a degree in Graphic Design.

Her son Patrick is a senior majoring in graphic design, and Joshua is a freshman studying sports medicine. Maddie is in fifth grade.

“I like the fact that all three of us are here and going to school at the same time. It’s good to be close to them. It helps our family to be close-knit,” Cruz said.

Maddie has gone to volleyball camps and performances here and loves the annual Easter Egg Hunt at the president’s house.

“She said she’s going (to MTSU),” Cruz joked. “Sometimes she goes to class with me . . . I think she feels a part of MTSU too. I think the university environment really enhances our lives, and even at her age because she gets to be involved in things on campus.”

From Tullahoma, Tennessee, Cruz has worked in the Blue ID office for two years. She said she enjoys interacting with students and employees getting their ID cards.

She is one of the first people new students, faculty, and employees encounter.

“Of course we’re busy the first week of school and stay steady with lost IDs and have been doing a lot of new hires,” she said. “I like talking to the new students and staff; they seem really excited when they come in.”

Cruz is obtaining a Master of Liberal Arts, but because of work and family can only take one class per semester in the evenings. It may be 2021 before she finishes, but that is fine with her—she jokes that she could possibly graduate with her youngest son.

She and her family live in Murfreesboro and attend World Outreach Church.

Help get the word out to students:

You must have a Blue ID to print or copy on campus. There is no charge for this service but usage is being tracked. Info: mtsu.edu/BlueID
Banner hardware upgrade in February was successful

ITD recently completed an upgrade to the underlying infrastructure for MTSU’s Ellucian Banner system, which is the University’s primary information system for student records, admissions, financial aid, finance, human resources, and course scheduling.

The new infrastructure will improve data-loading times and scalability, while providing better resiliency and redundancy in the event of a catastrophic disruption.

The project required a data migration and conversion from the existing system into the new infrastructure, which was installed and tested in a parallel environment. The cut-over to the new system took place Feb. 10-11.

Known as a hyper-convergence, this infrastructure system uses software-centric architecture that tightly integrates computing, storage, networking, and virtualization resources.

A hyper-converged system enables the integrated technologies to be managed as a single system through a common administrative toolset.

This upgrade replaced outdated, proprietary computer equipment with state-of-the-art, commodity-based hardware running software-defined workloads.

The project involved replacing Banner Sun M5000 host servers running Sun Solaris as physical machines with Dell servers powered by Nutanix running Red Hat Enterprise Linux as VMware virtual machines.

Upgrading the data center network was also part of this project. ITD converted the University’s data center network to Cisco’s ACI software-defined networking platform with 10Gbps switching for server connectivity and 80Gbps connectivity between data centers.

On top of the data center network, ITD upgraded to new Palo Alto firewalls with 10Gbps connectivity between the campus and the data centers.

This upgrade will also lay the foundation for additional improvements in the future, such as improved Banner access from mobile devices as ITD upgrades the Ellucian Banner software itself.

MT offers Microsoft Imagine Academy

MTSU is member institution of the Microsoft Imagine Academy.

That membership provides faculty, staff, and students access to Microsoft’s Imagine Academy—a collection of downloadable learning resources and self-paced tutorials that you can use to prepare to take Microsoft certification exams.

Categorized into Productivity, Computer Science, and IT Infrastructure, the materials make up a catalog of more than 250 tutorials.

In conjunction with this access and sponsored by the Tennessee Board of Regents, MTSU has a limited site license allowing faculty, staff, and students to take Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certification exams (i.e. WORD, EXCEL, PowerPoint, Access) at no cost.

If you are interested in exploring the self-paced tutorials, incorporating the materials/resources from the repository, or learning more about taking a MOS certification exam, visit mtsu.edu/msitacad.

Faculty who have questions on how to incorporate the academy into coursework should contact the Faculty Instructional Technology Center at 615-904-8189.

Digital Signage

Use Digital Signage to let people know about new and exciting opportunities

Digital signage is a great way to tell folks about wonderful opportunities. Here is an example from the MTSU Office of Education Abroad, introducing faculty and students to adventures around the world.

For more information about MTSU’s digital signage network or for content suggestions, email digicontent@mtsu.edu.
Franklin named new director of client services for ITD

Alan Franklin joined ITD at Middle Tennessee State University as director of client services in January.

He said his educational and professional background helped prepare him for the new role of providing tech support for students, staff, and faculty by phone, email, or in-person.

Franklin, from Greenfield, Tennessee, worked his way up in the Information Technology profession after starting as a student worker at the University of Tennessee–Martin.

“My professional career in Information Technology began in 2000 when I accepted a part-time position with Gordon Food Service as a computer technician. I was attending UTM at the time, and this position afforded me the ability to work around my class schedule,” he said.

“I was offered a student worker position with the Information Technology Services Department at UTM in 2002 and accepted.”

In 2003, he was offered a full-time position with the ITS department at UT-Martin as an IT Technologist III and worked his way up to manager of Technical Support Services in 2010.

He holds a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration, with a Management Information Systems concentration, from UT-Martin.

At MTSU he is responsible for leading and directing the Client Services Department in its mission of providing support for campus technology.

This support is administered through the ITD Help Desk and technicians assigned to specific colleges, academic areas, and administrative offices.

“The best part of the job is having the opportunity to expand my knowledge and experience and work with an incredible new staff,” Franklin said. “The most challenging part is adapting to a new environment and culture which is both similar and dissimilar to what I had become accustomed.”

Reach the Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or by email at help@mtsu.edu.

ITD’s Haupt attends POD Conference in Louisville

Scott Haupt attended the 41st annual Professional Organizational Development Network Conference in Louisville, Kentucky, last fall.

Haupt, instructional design specialist for ITD, said the theme for this year’s conference was “Transforming Relationships: Fostering Cultures of Deep Learning.”

The conference included:

• A plenary session with poet Nikki Giovanni, University Distinguished Professor at Virginia Tech, that explored the power of words and their connection to teaching
• Interactive workshops combining brief presentations/panel discussions with methods designed to engage participants
• Roundtable discussions (in a smaller group setting) of concepts, approaches, issues, case studies, and/or readings
• Research presentations centered on increasing the amount of research POD members are undertaking (relating to teaching/learning and professional networks)
• Opportunities to engage in peer-to-peer learning, collaborative activities, and creative experiences (fashioned as ”just-in-time” learning sessions)

“I focused on sessions relating to faculty professional development, graduate student professional development, new technologies for supporting teaching, and organizational development and sat in on numerous research presentations as well,” Haupt said.

“I’ve been revisiting the information I collected at the conference regularly, as my eyes have been opened to new and improved/more efficient ways of doing things.”
Make sure Microsoft Windows updates actually get installed, not just checked

One question ITD staff often gets is from people wondering why they have run Microsoft Windows updates but still cannot connect their laptops to the Wi-Fi network here at MTSU.

This problem usually stems from looking only at the first line of a popup Windows Update menu, whereas it is the second line that you need to pay attention to.

The first line—“Most recent check for updates”—simply means this was the last date and time your computer connected to the servers at Microsoft to see if there were any updates available.

It does not actually indicate that updates were installed on your computer.

Whereas the second line—“Updates were installed”—actually indicates that not only did your computer download needed updates, it also installed the updates too.

It also is important for people to click on the “View Update History” and make sure that the updates have been installing successfully.

If you see a bunch of failed updates, it could indicate an issue with Microsoft Windows and you may want to ask the ITD tech assigned to your college to look at your laptop.

Contact the ITD Help Desk at 615-898-5345 or by email at help@mtsu.edu. Numerous tech help resources can be accessed at mtsu.edu/help/index.php.

Telephone Tidbits: Customizing S4B Options through Outlook

With Skype for Business, missed call notifications are directed to your MTSU email inbox as a way of informing you of the calls you missed.

If you wish to turn off those notifications, follow the steps below:

1. Login to https://mail.mtsu.edu
2. In the upper right corner, click settings and options.
3. Choose phone in the left margin.
4. Scroll down the page to find notification settings and uncheck the box next to send an email message to my Inbox when I miss a phone call.
5. Click save.