QUEST 2025

INQUIRE
LEARN
ENGAGE
THRIVE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Exercise Science
Middle Tennessee State University
OF
2019

QUEST 2025

Middle Tennessee State University

Quest for Student Success 2025

MTSU's **Quest for Student Success 2013–2016** set ambitious goals to improve student retention and graduation rates. The University transformed advising through hiring 47 additional academic advisors and using data analytics, which allowed faculty greater flexibility to focus on career advising with students. Our faculty promoted student engagement by redesigning 27 gateway courses, including 12 of MTSU's most predictive and highest-enrollment courses. Learning support was championed across campus through a more robust system of tutoring, used by an average of 9,000 students per semester; the introduction of supplemental instruction to about 120 course sections, assisting 5,000 students per semester; and the launch of a student-faculty MakerSpace in James E. Walker Library. Specialized programs and activities, such as the Scholars Academy and the Presidential Student Success Award Program, were implemented, while guaranteed and special academic scholarships were provided to increasing numbers of incoming students with high GPAs and ACT scores. Faculty, administrators, and staff, working together, identified and shared performance metrics to inform changes in policies, procedures, and practices. Most importantly, faculty, administrators, and staff collectively embraced our pledge to students: **We are here to help you succeed.**

These investments have significantly improved our students' successes. Since the launch of the Quest, MTSU's institutional fall-to-fall retention rate for first-time, full-time freshmen has increased from 69.0% to 75.8%; the four-year graduation rate, a long-term success indicator, has increased 12.1 percentage points since 2014, from 18.1% to 30.2%; and the University has graduated more than 25,000 students. Not only are more students being retained, but success rates in other areas have improved. More students are completing at least 15 hours a semester, thereby earning their degrees sooner and minimizing their debt. The number of students on probation or suspension has dropped, and more students have earned the Dean's List designation.

These achievements have set the stage for us to reimagine our Quest and to commit ourselves more fully to student learning, the cornerstone of student success. Now the question is: **How does the University better define student success as its core commitment by creating an inclusive culture that fosters all students' capacities to be active learning partners as students, alumni, and engaged citizens?**

Next Steps

The **Quest for Student Success 2025** focuses on student success marked by a deeper, broader, and more equitable academic and student life experience that extends learning beyond graduation. Students who learn how to learn, how to ask the right questions, and how to take risks and learn from their mistakes succeed personally and professionally. They take ownership of their own education and become critical thinkers. Thus, we seek to develop **lifelong learners** with the **capacity to discover, create, recreate, innovate, and break new ground** as they address their own professional development and the challenges of the world.

The University now refines its focus to **shape a distinctive experience that supports engaged learning, builds self-confidence in learning, inspires lifelong learning and civic engagement, and rewards learning successes for all students**. Shaping such an experience requires a shared, concerted, and intentional focus by every member of the MTSU family—whether student, faculty, administrator, staff, alumni, University friend, or supporter. **Engaged learning, when expected and practiced by all of us in the University community, becomes the catalyst for creating a distinctive and successful student experience—and the bedrock for our students' future learning and successes in their careers and civic lives.** The Quest and its call for a distinctive and successful student college experience is central to the goal of MTSU's academic master plan, **The Reach to Distinction**.

Goal

Middle Tennessee State University will graduate students who are prepared to thrive professionally, committed to critical inquiry and lifelong learning, and engaged as civically, globally responsible citizens.

To achieve this goal, the University will seek to provide each student with a distinctive learning experience that lays the foundation for student success, lifelong learning, and civic engagement. The University will use a three-pronged approach to create such an environment: an enhanced academic experience; an enhanced student life experience; and an enhanced academic and student support network.

Strategic Path I

Enhance the quality of the academic experience.

The core of a quality academic experience is the mutual engagement of students and faculty in learning, scholarship and creative activity, and service. Such an enterprise acknowledges the pivotal role of faculty in leading, guiding, and engaging students in intellectual pursuits and recognizes that a commitment to an enriched faculty experience lies at the core of an enriched student experience. It is the faculty who create academic and professional pathways and actively engage with students. Therefore, a key to enhancing the quality of the academic experience lies in helping the faculty engage in innovative joint pursuits with students.

Consequently, the University will:

- Leverage the quality of academic programs to recruit, enroll, educate, graduate, and link a diverse body of students to a future of professional and civic engagement.
- Invest in a diverse faculty to develop creative curricula embedded with high-impact learning practices to heighten active, collaborative learning and achieve equity in student achievement.

Strategic Path II

Enhance the quality of the student life experience.

Linking a student's academic and student life experiences is essential to student success. Active student life and cocurricular learning deepen engagement inside and outside the classroom, ground a student in an inclusive University community, and set the stage for a student-learning practice that carries forward to and beyond graduation.

Strong, integrated links between cocurricular activities and curricula, campus spaces and learning, students and peers through mutual interests and pursuits, and students and alumni—these are key ingredients of an environment that supports learning and allows students to shape their own experiences and celebrate their own successes.

Consequently, the University will:

- Address the wellness, financial health, and safety needs of students.
- Invest in an inclusive campus-wide environment, including a virtual environment, that fosters informal living-learning opportunities for on-campus, off-campus, and online students.
- Expand MTSU academic and student support to eliminate achievement gaps and address critical student success points (informed by data analytics) for students as they move through their college careers into their professional lives.

Strategic Path III

Establish MTSU as an educational, cultural, and economic hub to support student success and lifelong learning.

An academic and professional network that facilitates student learning underscores the University's core responsibility. MTSU students, faculty, staff, administration, alumni, and friends will continue to build a University support community that encourages students to learn inside and outside the classroom, to engage in research and creative expression, and to connect with their broader communities through service. Central to doing this is our recommitment to **student-centered decision-making** in the crafting and delivery of University programs and services that **anticipate and acknowledge students' varied learning needs across their academic careers, through their transition into the professional world, and through the advancement of their professional careers.**

Consequently, the University will:

- Create enhanced learning networks, in strong partnership with the University's neighboring communities as well as business and industry, to support student academic and professional success.

Conclusion

The **Quest for Student Success 2025** underscores the University's core mission: to produce graduates who are prepared to thrive professionally, committed to critical inquiry and lifelong learning, and engaged as civically, globally responsible citizens. In placing student-centered learning at the forefront of the student experience, the University seeks to create and sustain a learning environment where **students themselves, in joint intellectual pursuit with faculty, become responsible decision-makers and active participants in learning**. The students' reward is a distinctive educational experience that sets a pattern of active, reflective, and inclusive learning propelling them to graduation and carrying them forward to embrace new challenges and new successes. Their knowledge and skills, combined with their capacity for continuous learning, will serve them well and immeasurably affect their communities. Their successes also will affirm the University's success in honoring its commitment to meet the higher educational needs of all students, and thus, of the state of Tennessee and its citizens.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

QUEST 2025

Implementation Plan

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Implementation Plan

Goal: Middle Tennessee State University will graduate students who are prepared to thrive professionally, committed to critical inquiry and lifelong learning, and engaged as civically, globally responsible citizens.

Strategic Path: Enhance the quality of the academic experience.

Objective: Leverage the quality of academic programs to recruit, enroll, educate, graduate, and link a diverse body of students to a future of professional and civic engagement.

Incorporate a required high-impact learning experience into every major.

Provost; Vice Provost, Academic Programs; Deans • Fall 2022

Grow graduate college enrollments by 3% to 5%, with a long-term goal of reaching 20% of MTSU's student body as graduate students paralleling our peers.

Vice Provost for Research/Dean, College of Graduate Studies, Deans • 2025

Launch new undergraduate and graduate degrees that meet a market demand for Tennessee; modify graduate degrees to meet market demand, including content and delivery of the degree programs that will ensure access, equity, and quality.

Vice Provost, Academic Programs; Deans • Annual

Expand civic engagement opportunities and establish a Free Speech Center as a national leader in First Amendment advocacy and civic engagement.

Provost • Fall 2019

Expand experiential learning and implement MT Engage, in partnership with MTSU's neighboring communities, to further facilitate and support student learning, scholarship, and career development.

Provost; Vice President, University Advancement; Vice Provost, Academic Programs; Deans • Annual

Eliminate achievement gaps by utilizing analytics, refining and expanding student support programs, and increasing the diversity of faculty.

Vice Provost, Student Success; Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs; Deans • Ongoing

Increase online, hybrid, and off-site cohort offerings, adaptive scheduling, and curricular flexibility responsive to a dynamic higher education environment.

Vice Provost, Student Success/Dean, University College; Deans • Annual

Build program-based academic communities for on-campus, online, and dual-enrolled students that connect them to the faculty, other students, alumni, and professionals in their major such as peer mentoring within a major, virtual learning networks within majors, and curricular professional events.

Provost; Vice Provost, Academic Programs; Deans; Chairs • Ongoing

Review and revise academic policies and practices to ensure greater equity, effectiveness, and efficiency, e.g., CPOS pressure points and catalog inconsistencies, discussions of required minors in degree programs, multi-term registration, probation criteria, and course repeat policy.

Provost; Vice Provost, Academic Programs; Vice President, Student Affairs • CPOS, Fall 2020; all policies and practices by Fall 2021

Establish a President's or Provost's Colloquium to strategically connect students and community members with leading thinkers and innovators across a broad spectrum of intellectual and educational arenas.

President, Provost, Deans • Fall 2021

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Strategic Path: Enhance the quality of the academic experience.

Objective: Invest in a diverse faculty to develop creative curricula embedded with high-impact learning practices to heighten active, collaborative learning and achieve equity in student achievement.

Complete a cohesive, integrated general education program that connects student learning to major fields of study and to professional and civic engagement.

Vice Provost, Academic Programs; Director, General Education • Fall 2022

Develop and redesign courses in the major to link learning activities to students' professional development and civic engagement.

Provost, Deans • Annual

Enhance financial and academic support for faculty and student scholarship to increase scholarly production and extramural financial support for scholarship (grants and contracts).

Vice Provost, Research; Deans • Annual

Create and sustain a comprehensive Faculty Development Program.

Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs; LT&ITC; Faculty Senate • Fall 2021

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Strategic Path: Enhance the quality of the student life experience.

Objective: Address the wellness, financial health, and safety needs of students.

Implement an Open Education Resources Program to ensure all students have timely access to academic program and professional development materials.

Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs; Vice President, Business and Finance • Fall 2020

Double available funding over the next 10 years to support the University's scholarship/financial resources portfolio.

Vice President, University Advancement • 2025

Revise the summer schedule to make financial aid more accessible to students pursuing coursework in summer.

Provost; Vice President, Student Affairs; Vice Provost, Student Success/Dean, University College • Fall 2021

Biennially rebalance the University's scholarship and financial resources portfolio for need, merit, and emergency funding to support student success.

Vice President, University Advancement • Biennial Report

Create a student-centered website that provides one-point access to comprehensive, integrated wellness, financial health, and safety programs and services.

Provost, Vice Presidents • Fall 2021

Objective: Invest in an inclusive campus-wide environment, including a virtual environment, that fosters informal living-learning opportunities for on-campus, off-campus, and online students.

Implement the Facilities Master Plan to expand both academic buildings and residential living-learning spaces.

Vice President, Business and Finance; Campus Planning; Vice President, Student Affairs • 2025

Create student-friendly and accessible academic and gathering spaces throughout campus, e.g., social, recreational, technological, and maker spaces.

Vice President, Business and Finance; Campus Planning • Annual

Create student-friendly and accessible virtual academic and gathering spaces for off-campus and online students, e.g., information sources and livestreamed campus events.

Vice Provost, Student Success; Deans • Annual

Establish user-friendly designated visitor parking on campus to facilitate student/faculty/community collaboration.

Vice President, Business and Finance • Fall 2020

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Strategic Path: Enhance the quality of the student life experience.

Objective: Expand MTSU academic and student support to eliminate achievement gaps and address critical student success points (informed by data analytics) for students as they move through their college careers into their professional lives.

Implement an integrated program of career development services that coordinates services to students and to employers and uses institutional research to track career outcomes.

Vice President, Student Affairs; Deans; Assistant Vice Provost, Institutional Effectiveness • Fall 2021

Develop a comprehensive system to track graduates/alumni professionally through designated touchpoints in their careers, including their professional successes.

Vice President, University Advancement; Provost; Deans; Assistant Vice Provost, Institutional Effectiveness • Fall 2021

Create and support a culture of student-centered service through all divisions of the University.

Vice President, Business and Finance, Assistant Vice President, Human Resources Services • Annual

Leverage technology to enhance communication and services systems related to recruitment, enrollment, instruction and delivery, and student and academic support services, e.g., establish a student-specific MTSU portal with each student at their initial touchpoint with the University for continuity in communication.

Vice Presidents; Deans; Vice Provost, Student Success • Annual

Use data analytics to determine course scheduling to meet student demand and needs.

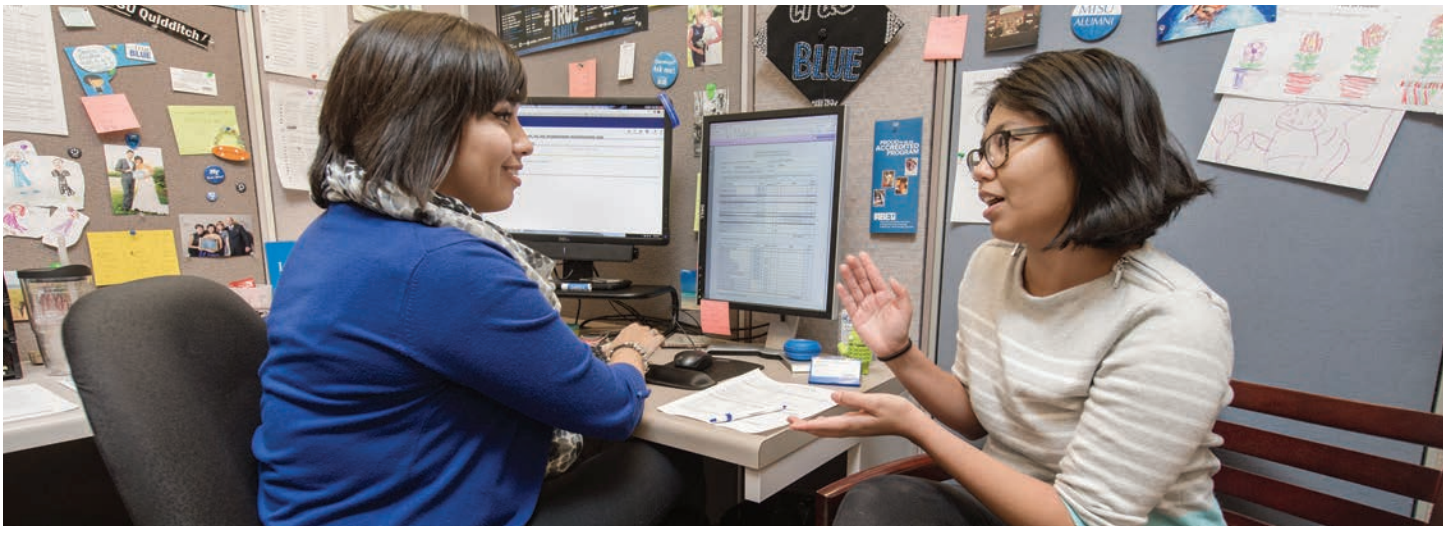
Provost • Fall 2020

Launch a Quest 2025 communications plan that will continuously inform students, faculty, staff, and community audiences.

Vice President, Marketing and Communications • 2019

Implement a Student Evaluation of Advisor process.

Vice Provost, Student Success • Fall 2020



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Implementation Plan

Goal: Middle Tennessee State University will graduate students who are prepared to thrive professionally, committed to critical inquiry and lifelong learning, and engaged as civically, globally responsible citizens.

Strategic Path: Establish MTSU as an educational, cultural, and economic hub to support student success and lifelong learning.

Objective: Create enhanced learning networks, in strong partnership with the University's neighboring communities, as well as business and industry, to support student academic and professional success.

Develop, in partnership with the City of Murfreesboro and Rutherford County, an educational, cultural, and commercial district for learning, performance, entertainment, and commerce.

President, Vice Presidents, Community Constituencies • 2025

Establish an educational hub for business and corporate partnerships in the Nashville/Davidson County SMSA to support student learning and increase access to career development and career advancement.

President; Provost; Vice Presidents; Vice Provost, Academic Programs; Deans • Fall 2020

Construct a performing arts center, in partnership with neighboring communities, to serve as a regional educational and cultural hub for learning and performance.

President, Vice Presidents, Community Constituencies • 2025

Leverage completion of Middle Tennessee Boulevard and new entrances to campus; complete the MTSU Athletic Plaza project; and implement a destination activities program to enhance community access to and engagement with the student life of the University.

President, Vice Presidents, Deans, Athletic Director • Ongoing; Athletic Plaza 2025

MTSU
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MTSU
MTSU

I AM true
BLUE

As a member of this diverse community,
I am a valuable contributor to its progress and success.
I am engaged in the life of this community.
I am a recipient and a giver.
I am a listener and a speaker.
I am honest in word and deed.
I am committed to reason, not violence.
I am a learner now and forever.
I am a BLUE RAIDER.

I AM trueBLUE

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

I AM *true*BLUE™

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Middle Tennessee State University will graduate students who are prepared to **thrive** professionally, committed to critical **inquiry** and lifelong **learning**, and **engaged** as civically, globally responsible citizens.