

NEWS FROM THE PRESIDENT AND INFORMATION



Sidney McPhee

MTSU January 23, 2026 | mtsu.edu

Welcome to the Spring 2026 semester and my biannual Campus Newsletter!

Every president of every college and university in America believes their institution is special and among the best choices for degree seekers. I am proud to say that, because of you, I can back up that claim with proof.

Our University was again included on the *Forbes* list of the 500 top colleges in the U.S., one of only four public institutions in the state to make the 2026 ranking (determined using 2025 data).

MTSU was also among 391 colleges and universities recognized among the nation's best for 2026 by The Princeton Review, one of the nation's leading education services companies. Only two public universities in Tennessee—MTSU and the University of Tennessee in Knoxville—made the list. I am proud that MTSU made this prestigious list for the seventh consecutive year. The colleges recognized constitute only about 15% of America's nearly 2,400 four-year institutions.

In addition, *The Wall Street Journal* recognized MTSU on its 2026 list of America's Best Colleges; 2025 was our first year on that list. And MTSU was among four public institutions in the state named to the Colleges of Distinction 2025–26 Best Colleges in the U.S. Rankings such as these elevate MTSU's profile across the nation and around the world. But what truly matters is what such rankings reveal: our unrelenting commitment to the individual success of each and every student in our True Blue family.

As always, I welcome your feedback and comments. Please contact me at sidney.mcphee@mtsu.edu. I also invite you to visit my blog at mtsu.edu/president for updates and information from my office.

Inside this edition

Enrollment and Admissions cont.....	2	MTSU Online/Nontraditional Students	16
Student Life cont.....	3	University College/ Office of Student Success.....	18
MTSU Arts.....	3	New Look for MTSU.edu Homepage.....	21
Budget and Salary Update	4	Advancement	22
Reaffirmation of Accreditation and Strategic Plan	4	Daniels Center.....	23
Technology	5	Free Speech Center	24
Campus Planning.....	6	Remaining Vigilant	24
Academic Affairs.....	8	International Relations.....	25
Research and Graduate Studies	12	True Blue TV Event Productions	26
Career Development.....	13	Blue Print	27
Athletics.....	14		

ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS



MTSU produces more graduates than any other local university (close to 5,000 each year). One in every six college-educated individuals in the greater Nashville area holds an MTSU degree.

We continue to work extremely hard to ensure that we are attracting the best and the brightest new undergraduate students from across the state of Tennessee and the region.

Our recruitment team, MT One Stop, advising staff, academic department chairs, deans, and faculty work very hard all year round to deliver results.

Continued on page 2

STUDENT LIFE

Creating a vibrant campus community where students can connect, grow, and thrive is at the heart of the MTSU experience.



Our commitment to the slogan "Your Journey, Our Commitment" means we're dedicated to providing meaningful opportunities for engagement across all areas of student life.

Fall 2025 was all about reimagining campus traditions and events, bringing fresh energy to

experiences that foster community and support student success, and that prepare students for life beyond college. Two beloved traditions made a strong comeback: **Week of Welcome (WOW)** and **Exam Jam**.

Continued on page 3

ENROLLMENT AND ADMISSIONS *Cont.*

First, the good news: **We have admitted more than 9,000 freshmen for Fall 2026!**

The “enrollment cliff” we’ve prepared for over many enrollment cycles has arrived. The number of high school graduates in the country and in Tennessee will begin to decrease this year and will maintain a downward trend for the next few years. While schools in the middle Tennessee area won’t see as much of a decrease (and some may grow!), **competition for those students will be fierce.** Our focus for the spring term will continue to be yield—the percentage of admitted students who choose to enroll at a specific college or university.

Last year in the January President’s Newsletter, I reported that we would try an initiative to increase yield of our freshman admits, Admitted Student Day. While we hoped 500 students would take us up on the invitation to campus for a day of learning what it would be like to be a Blue Raider, almost 1,500 students attended the event.

In 2026, we will build on last year’s success and lessons learned, **holding two Admitted Student events**—one on Feb. 7 and another on Feb. 28. These events allow our academic colleges and programs to showcase their departments, resources, faculty, staff, and the work our current students are doing on campus. New admits get a glimpse of the opportunities that lie before them and get a real chance to experience how it will feel to be part of that academic community. We also will offer the ability to interact with support resources on campus such as

MT One Stop, MTSU Housing, MT Dining, the Disability and Access Center, and the Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center. Attendees will receive special perks, including **early access to select their New to Blue orientation sessions** before other students. Students also can pick up their Blue IDs on campus, if they upload their photos before the session.

Perhaps the most robust of our efforts to attract students is our annual, three-month True Blue Tour, which recently **awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships throughout the fall event schedule** while attracting a host of excited prospective students and families learning about MTSU—and deciding whether it’s the right fit to continue their academic journeys.

This year’s 15-stop tour, including two Nashville stops, took top campus administrators on the road to showcase all MTSU has to offer—more than 300 undergraduate and graduate majors and concentrations, nationally ranked student programming, and more than \$2 billion invested in academic facilities over the last 20 years.

The \$1,146,550 in scholarships awarded during the tour included 151 individual scholarships given to prospective students whose names were drawn at the evening student receptions, but the bulk of it—almost \$983,000—was awarded to the 368 schools represented at the luncheons to allow high school guidance counselors and community college advisors to award to students at their schools as they deem appropriate!





STUDENT LIFE *Cont.*

WOW returned in full force, featuring signature events like the President’s Party, Convocation, Back to School Bonanza, Meet Murfreesboro, SGA’s Sip and Paint, Fight Song, Blue Zoo Bash, and the first home football game. These events gave new and returning students the chance to build friendships and feel connected to the Blue Raider community from Day 1.

We closed the semester with Exam Jam, a late-night breakfast hosted by Student Affairs and MT Dining, serving more than 800 students—a perfect way to recharge before finals.

Homecoming 2025 was another highlight, uniting students, alumni, faculty, and the Murfreesboro community in celebration of Blue Raider pride. From colorful floats and spirited performances to the parade’s electric atmosphere, Homecoming strengthened bonds and created lasting memories.

Sustainability also took center stage, with **MT Dining’s launch of OZZI reusable to-go boxes** at McCallie Dining Hall. This initiative is reducing the use of approximately 55,000 Styrofoam containers annually, and we’re excited to expand the program to Student Union dining venues in the coming year.

Efforts like these reflect MTSU’s ongoing commitment to enhancing student life, building school spirit, and creating an inclusive environment where every student can succeed academically and socially. As we look to the future, these traditions and innovations set the stage for even greater engagement and community connection. We are excited to **kick off the spring Connection Point program** with new programs and initiatives. Be sure you check out the calendar at mtsu.edu/campuslife/connectionpoint.

MTSU ARTS

The MTSU College of Liberal Arts fosters community engagement and economic prosperity through innovative arts and culture initiatives. Here is a look at upcoming MTSU Arts events:

- The **MTSU Arts Celebration Concert** takes place Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m. in Tucker Theatre.
- The Department of Art and Design, in collaboration with the Office of International Affairs and the Consulate-General of Japan in Nashville, welcomes **Yokai Parade: Supernatural Monsters from Japan**,

a major international traveling exhibition organized by The Japan Foundation. The exhibition will run from Jan. 20–Feb. 24 in Todd Art Gallery.

- **Performances of *Clue* will run Feb. 26–March 1** in Tucker Theatre. Based on the iconic 1985 Paramount movie which was inspired by the classic Hasbro board game, *Clue* is a hilarious farce meets murder mystery.
- Choreographed by guest artists and our talented faculty, **the Spring Dance Concert is scheduled for April 23–25**

in Tucker Theatre. The concert will feature collaborative work with design, technical, and stage management students from the Department of Theatre and Dance.

- Art and Design Professor **Sisavanh Houghton’s work will be featured in the “In Her Place” exhibition** at the Frist Art Museum in Nashville from Jan. 29 through April 26.

For a full list of spring MTSU Arts events or to learn more about joining the MTSU Arts Patrons Society, visit mtsu.edu/mtsuarts.

BUDGET AND SALARY UPDATE

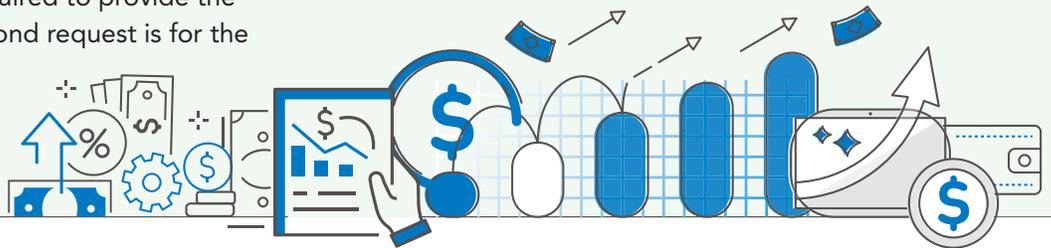
Looking toward fiscal year 2026–27, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is recommending operating state appropriations of \$152.8 million for MTSU. This will be a \$1.7 million increase, or 1.1%, over 2025–26 appropriations. This net increase is a combination of a decrease of \$4.7 million in outcomes formula adjustments and an increase of \$6.4 million in proposed new funding for the University. Funding for any 2026–27 salary increases is not included in these figures and will not be known until the release of the governor’s budget in early February.

Last June, the MTSU Board of Trustees approved two fiscal year 2026–27 capital outlay projects to be submitted to THEC. The first request is for a Civic Leadership and Applied Humanities Building. The total project cost is \$127 million, with \$117 million being requested from the state and the University required to provide the remaining \$9.8 million. The second request is for the Aerospace Campus Phase 2 in Shelbyville. This total project cost is \$138 million, of which \$127 million is being requested

from the state and the University required to contribute the other \$11 million.

THEC also recommended \$24.3 million in capital maintenance funds for 13 MTSU projects, which include central plant and campus utilities updates, structural and exterior envelope repairs, campuswide access control and security updates, elevator modernization, lighting and electrical updates, hydronic systems renovations, stormwater updates, sidewalk repairs, life safety systems, plumbing and restroom upgrades, and HVAC updates.

THEC’s recommendations have been submitted to the Department of Finance and Administration for consideration in the proposed state budget that Gov. Bill Lee will submit to the state legislature. At that point, we will have more information regarding our likely 2026–27 state and capital appropriations.



REAFFIRMATION OF ACCREDITATION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Work continues on MTSU’s reaffirmation of accreditation by our institutional accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Beginning March 23, MTSU will **host a team of external reviewers** from comparable non-Tennessee SACSCOC institutions. This On-Site Committee Review Team will work to resolve Compliance Certification issues that the University addressed in the Focused Report to be submitted in early February. The team will also confirm MTSU’s compliance with the accreditation standards required by the U.S. Department of Education.

During the visit, the On-Site Reaffirmation Committee will meet with MTSU administrators, faculty, staff, students, and members of the Board of Trustees. At the conclusion of the visit, the committee will present its findings to University leaders.

Additional information about the on-site review will be communicated in the coming weeks.

Next, we are now **halfway through the first year of MTSU’s new Strategic Plan 2035**. See the accompanying graphic for more information.

MTSU
STRATEGIC PLAN 2035
PRIORITIES

Learn more about strategies, initiatives, and implementation at mtsu.edu/strategicplan.



Increase the institution’s creative and research profile and be a top choice for students

Strengthen the community so all learners and workers thrive

Cultivate sustainable partnerships

TECHNOLOGY

Technology bridges gaps in learning and streamlines administrative processes, benefiting students, faculty, and staff. It's crucially important on college campuses. Our Information Technology Division (ITD) staff works extremely hard to provide the resources needed to deliver and receive instruction and to do our jobs on a day-to-day basis.

Here are some recent highlights:

MTSU Website Homepage Refresh

See article on page 21.

Business Process Modernization

True Blue Fusion is MTSU's multiyear initiative to modernize Human Resources and Finance operations by transitioning to Oracle Cloud. This transformation streamlines processes such as hiring, onboarding, payroll, procurement, budgeting, and reporting, reducing manual work while improving reporting, accuracy, transparency, and security. Cross campus partners, including the Blue Partner Network (a collective of 35 individuals representing all campus divisions), are actively preparing their colleagues for the transition through ongoing communications, meetings, readiness surveys, and training development. With a go live date of January 2027, the project continues to build momentum as teams collaborate to design better, more efficient ways of working. Learn more at mtsu.edu/fusion.

Share Drive Storage Upgrade

We're thrilled to announce a major upgrade to the MTSU share drive storage, powered by the cutting edge Pure Storage platform. This enhancement provides faster access to the shared files, along with enhanced reliability, stronger security, and a modern infrastructure designed to support the way our campus operates today.

By moving to Pure Storage's next generation architecture, we're ensuring that our academic and administrative resources run on technology designed to meet the evolving needs of our academic and administrative divisions. This upgrade represents a significant step forward in terms of speed, stability, and innovation. The migration from the old storage devices to the Pure Storage systems will start during the spring semester.

Canvas Implementation

Canvas will become the official learning management system (LMS) for MTSU beginning Summer 2026. This strategic move is led by a dynamic collaboration between our Information Technology Division (ITD) and

Academic Affairs, ensuring a seamless integration tailored to our campus community's needs. Yvette Clark, vice president for information technology and chief information officer, and Brian Hinote, vice provost for faculty and strategic initiatives, are co-leading the effort, combining IT expertise with academic insight to enhance the learning experience.

Faculty have been involved with the decision to switch to Canvas from the beginning and have been instrumental in this transition. Each college has a Canvas Faculty Champion available to provide valuable peer-to-peer assistance and guidance to faculty during the move from D2L to Canvas. Furthermore, 71 faculty members have chosen to be early adopters and to teach with Canvas instead of D2L this semester. A full list of early adoption courses is online at mtsu.edu/canvas/spring2026.

MTSU trainings for Canvas began in October 2025 and will continue this spring. Training sessions will be held via Zoom, with representatives from the Center for Teaching and Mentoring, ITD, and MTSU Online available to answer questions and provide additional support. Information about future training dates and recordings of past training sessions can be accessed at ctm.mtsu.edu/canvas. More information about the transition to Canvas, including resources for students and faculty, is available at mtsu.edu/canvas.

Pipeline MT/SSB9 Upgrades

Last fall, MTSU started the process of upgrading the systems accessed through PipelineMT from Self-Service Banner 8 (SSB8) to Self-Service Banner 9 (SSB9). This upgrade is bringing a refreshed interface and improved functionality for students, faculty, and staff. ITD and Academic Affairs are collaborating on this phased rollout of new Pipeline menus and have successfully launched new menus for the Finance, General/Employee, Financial Aid, and Faculty sections of PipelineMT. The Registration and Student/Admissions menus will be the final sections to be updated in the Spring 2026 semester.

Visit mtsu.edu/ssb throughout the semester for the latest updates on the PipelineMT upgrades.

CAMPUS PLANNING

Last year, we opened our new \$74.8 million Applied Engineering Building and our \$66 million Stephen and Denise Smith Student-Athlete Performance Center, and we cut the ribbon on our \$73 million-plus Aerospace Shelbyville project. Here are the most recent updates on our ongoing capital projects.

Renovations to KOM and Rutledge Hall

- \$54.3 million total project cost
- Estimated project completion: Summer 2026
- Both original buildings dating back to the institution's founding in 1911, with KOM the first building on campus
- KOM to house Mathematics, Computer Science, Data Science, and Actuarial Science; Rutledge being converted from a residence hall into an office/classroom building for University College/University Studies



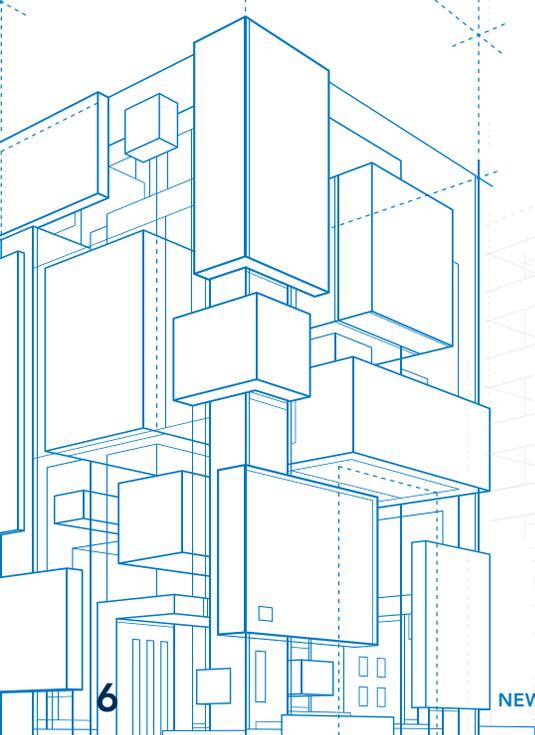
P3 Residence Hall

- Estimated completion: Fall 2027
- New five-story student housing building to contain 150 units/554 beds at the corner of Blue Raider Drive and Homecoming Circle, a natural threshold into campus, which represents the opportunity to connect academics, student life programs, and recreation and wellness hubs



New Parking Structure

- \$27 million total project cost
- 182,000 square feet
- Estimated completion: Spring 2027
- Construction of a parking garage for 550 parking spaces on a portion of the existing Womack Lane housing site



Additions and Renovations to Murphy Center

- \$119 million total project cost
- Estimated completion: Summer 2029
- Addresses a range of facility needs, including athletic program improvements, event and performance space enhancements, updated classroom spaces, dance studio enhancements, and more
- Includes construction of a new addition to provide a new, primary entry and lobby space to serve Murphy Center



Renovations to Floyd Stadium

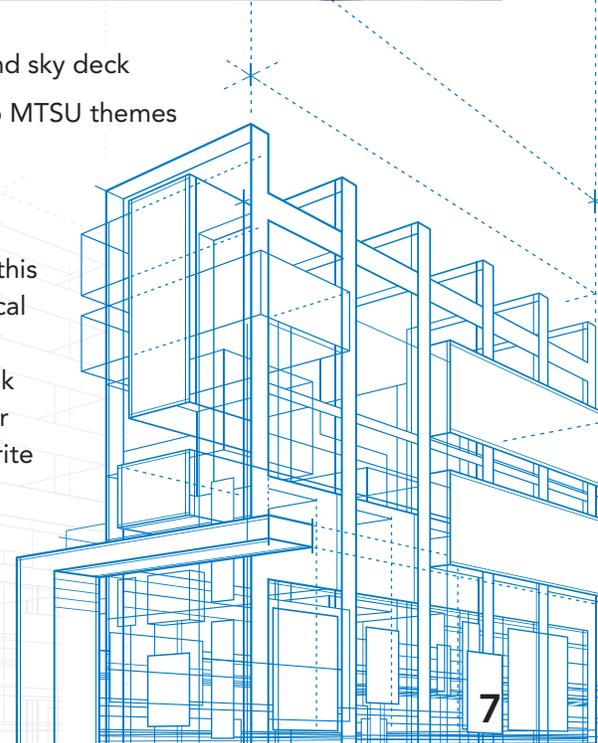
- \$16.5 million total project cost
- Estimated completion: Summer 2027
- Renovation and replacement of a portion of the west grandstand bleachers, providing new steel support structure and aluminum bleachers for these sections to match the remainder of the seating at Floyd Stadium

On-Campus Hotel

- Negotiations continuing for the previously announced construction of a four-story, on-campus hotel with 120 guestrooms at the corner of Greenland Drive and Middle Tennessee Boulevard
- Public-private partnership to serve as a real-world learning lab for Tourism and Hospitality Management students while also serving academic visitors, athletics families, attendees of Murphy Center events, and conference guests
- Lease negotiations in progress
- Would offer typical front-of-house and back-of-house hotel programming, outdoor pool and lawn, fitness center, meeting space, anchor restaurant, corner café, game room, and sky deck
- Interior finishes to follow brand standards with custom features tying back to MTSU themes



Seeking to capitalize upon these many multimillion-dollar investments in new campus facilities and future renovations at and around Greenland Drive and Middle Tennessee Boulevard in particular, I unveiled plans in 2025 to develop this area into an entertainment and sports district for not only students but also local residents and visitors from throughout the region. Our long-term vision is to **create what could be called The Lightning Zone**, where our students can walk from their residence halls or nearby off-campus apartments to performances or games at Murphy Center or Floyd Stadium as well as stop for a meal at a favorite restaurant and meet family and friends. I expect it to be a place that draws community members and visitors not only for tournaments, conferences, and games, but also for an occasional night out—supporting local businesses and generating revenue for the city and county.



ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Each of the colleges and academic units at MTSU maintains a high level of activity and produces news worth crowing about. Here are just a few recent examples.

Campuswide

MTSU's expanded Board of Trustees welcomed its three newest members, each serving six-year terms: **John Floyd** of Murfreesboro, founder and owner of Ole South Properties; **Jimmy Granbery** of Nashville, chair and CEO of H.G. Hill Realty; and **Chad White** of Murfreesboro, executive vice president, general counsel, and secretary at Brookdale Senior Living. The board also honored the service of outgoing trustee, alumna, and accomplished businesswoman **Pam Wright**, who was an inaugural board member, having served since 2017 when she was appointed by then-Gov. Bill Haslam. Lastly, MTSU Trustees unanimously reelected **Stephen B. Smith** as chair and **Christine Karbowski Vanek** as vice chair for two-year terms.

Our Board of Trustees took initial actions in December to **create new graduate degree programs in Health Care Administration as well as Film and Television**. Trustees unanimously approved consideration of a Master of Health Care Administration (M.H.A.) in the Jennings A. Jones College of Business, the first regulatory step necessary in the process. Trustee Michael Wade, chair of the board's Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee, said data and industry support letters demonstrate high demand for health care administrators. The M.H.A. proposal may now be developed for consideration by the campus community and staff at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, and, if approved, returned to the trustees for a final vote. The board granted its final vote of approval for a proposed Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Film and Television in the Scott Borchetta College of Media and Entertainment. Wade



said the program will provide advanced instruction in production, directing, editing, cinematography, sound design, and emerging technologies. The M.F.A. proposal was presented to the University's Graduate Council on Dec. 5, and a request will be made to place it on the February 2026 agenda for the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. If approved by THEC and SACSCOC, the University's accreditation body, the M.F.A. will be available this August.

Scott Borchetta College of Media and Entertainment

MTSU's Department of Recording Industry was named among **Billboard's Top Music Business Schools for the 11th consecutive time**, earning recognition in the publication's 2025 list. The recognition places MTSU among just over 40 institutions worldwide selected based on industry recommendations, alumni success, and sustained excellence in music business education.

Media Arts Video and Film Production students gained high-profile live-event experience working the Country Music Association's **CMA Awards red carpet broadcast** for WKRN News 2. Students assisted the WKRN-TV crew with red carpet coverage and served as production assistants for the CMA main show, providing behind-the-scenes support for a major national broadcast. During the year, students on MTSU's Media Arts Productions team produced 24 live productions across sports and music, totaling 70 hours of live programming, and executed eight live events.

The University's student-run media platform, *Sidelines*, **celebrated 100 years of serving campus** and the community through award-winning journalism. Originally a printed newspaper, *Sidelines* has evolved into a news website and email newsletter while remaining true to its mission as a student-led news organization that has provided scores of student journalists with an opportunity to put their classroom knowledge to use.



Jennings A. Jones College of Business



Google Gemini's Alessandro Cannas

2025 keynote speakers and guest lecturers included **experts on the cutting edge of emerging technologies.** CEO and entrepreneur Jessica O. Matthews served as keynote speaker for the September 2025 Jones College Leadership Summit, themed "The AI Revolution at Work: Leading Change and Overcoming Fears in a Rapidly Evolving World." Matthews urged those attending her presentation to fully embrace artificial intelligence and its many benefits in propelling innovation, while also acknowledging the ecological, ethical, and other challenges that come with it. In October, the Jones College hosted Alessandro Cannas, a Google Gemini marketing manager, for a guest lecture on how Google is shaping the future of marketing and customer experience through AI innovation and product strategy. Launched initially as Bard, Gemini now powers tools across Google's ecosystem, including Gmail, Maps, Docs, and the Gemini app on iOS. Cannas showcased features like Deep Research, Quiz Generator, and AI-powered app prototyping, all designed to enhance learning and productivity. Following Cannas' presentation, students engaged in a lively Q&A, asking questions about intellectual property, user interface, personalization, and the role of AI in future careers.

Kristen Shanine, a Management associate professor, was named the Pam Wright Chair of Entrepreneurship and director of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation. Meanwhile, **Bichaka Fayissa**, professor emeritus of Economics and Finance, retired in 2025 with 45 years of service—the longest term of employees recognized at the December faculty and staff recognition ceremony.



College of Basic and Applied Sciences

MTSU's Data Science program has launched a forward-looking **undergraduate certificate, Using Artificial Intelligence.** Designed for MTSU students and working professionals eager to explore the transformative power of AI, this 10-credit-hour program is designed to provide students with foundational knowledge and the ability to implement AI ethically and responsibly. The certificate courses are currently a mix of on-ground and online options, with potential for a fully online option in the near future.



MTSU broke ground on its new \$73 million-plus, state-of-the-art Aerospace facility in Shelbyville on Dec. 3, marking a major step forward for one of the nation's most highly recognized aerospace and aviation programs. MTSU's Shelbyville operation plans, announced in September 2023, will result in an aviation hub that addresses the critical need for expansion and growth of the Department of Aerospace and its exploding pilot training program—while also meeting an important aviation industry need. With new hangars, classrooms, offices, and ramp space, the project will accommodate future fleet expansion and offer dedicated instructional spaces for training the next generation of aviation leaders. With its 20 full-time faculty, more than 100 flight instructors, and over 1,400 students representing 32 states and 10 countries, University leaders believe the Aerospace program is poised to reach even greater heights once the new operations are completed in an estimated two years.

2025 marked a milestone for CBAS and an inflection point for its Department of Engineering Technology when we **officially opened the \$74.8 million, 89,000-square-foot Applied Engineering Building** last August. Equipped with millions of dollars' worth of advanced technology, this facility will forever change the way our students learn and our faculty teach. More than just a new building, it represents an investment in Tennessee's future workforce and a commitment to innovation in engineering,

technology, and advanced manufacturing. The Applied Engineering Building provides world-class laboratories, robotics and automation spaces, and collaborative areas designed to prepare students for the rapidly evolving careers that await them. This remarkable facility also will support the addition of new undergraduate and graduate programs in engineering that are currently under development. The building is the latest addition to our Science Corridor of Innovation, a nexus for cutting-edge research and experiential learning that also includes the MTSU Science Building, School of Concrete and Construction Management Building, Davis Science Building, and Wisner-Patten Science Hall.

College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

CBHS is undergoing a significant reorganization, effective July 1. The Department of Health and Human Performance and Department of Human Sciences are being dissolved and their **degree programs realigned to become three new academic departments**: Kinesiology and Sports Medicine; Health Sciences; and Sport and Hospitality Management. Additionally, the Department of Criminal Justice Administration will become the Department of Criminal Justice. The Textiles, Merchandising, and Design degree program, which will be renamed Fashion Studies, will be directly served by the CBHS Dean's Office as a temporary measure to maintain its unique focus and to facilitate growth. One undergraduate degree program—Human Development and Family Science—will move to the College of Education, and another—Interior Architecture—will relocate to the College of Basic and Applied Sciences.

The School of Nursing maintained its exceptional track record with a **100% NCLEX pass rate and 100% graduate employment rate**. The program recently earned full eight-year approval and national recognition as one of *U.S. News & World Report's* "Best" B.S.N. programs for 2025–26. These outcomes reinforce MTSU's standing as a premier institution for nursing education.



The Physician Assistant Studies program continues to attract unprecedented interest from prospective students. For the fifth cohort, the P.A. master's program received more than 1,400 applications for just 30 seats—a testament to both the program's reputation and the growing demand for qualified health care

providers. This competitive selection process ensures MTSU trains the highest-caliber students entering the medical profession.

Through a new partnership with Thrive Therapies, the **Speech-Language Pathology program is piloting innovative AI-assisted clinical technology**. The platform supports real-time data collection and progress documentation in the University's clinic, streamlining administrative workflows so student clinicians can dedicate more time to patient care while receiving enhanced, data-driven feedback from supervisors.

College of Education



THEC recently approved a **restructuring for the College of Education** to ensure that academic programs are housed within departments that reflect their primary disciplinary and professional focus. The new structure will enhance academic coherence, streamline oversight, and better position the college to meet the evolving needs of Tennessee's PK–20 education workforce—particularly in high-demand areas such as teacher preparation and school leadership. Effective July 1, the Department of Elementary and Special Education will be renamed the Womack Department of Teaching, Learning, and Innovation, and the Womack Department of Educational Leadership will be renamed the Department of Leadership, Development, and Educational Systems. Majors, minors, and certificates will be moved to the appropriate department homes.

COE received a \$150,000 grant from the Truist Charitable Fund to **boost support for students in the Tennessee Teach Back Initiative (TTBI)**, an MTSU program helping prepare and inspire future teachers to serve in their own hometowns across the state. The grant will expand the wrap-around services offered to TTBI students, such as test prep, licensure support, and one-on-one mentoring. It will also help launch a first-year induction program to support graduates as they begin their teaching careers. Created to address the statewide teacher shortage, the initiative focuses on developing licensed educators who return to

teach where they grew up, helping strengthen local schools and communities. Since our founding as a teacher's college, MTSU has prided itself on its ongoing tradition of training the next generation of educators to fill the critical role of providing high-quality classroom instruction to communities locally and far beyond.

TCOE will launch the **Difference Maker Innovation Micro-Grants Program in Spring 2026**, a new initiative designed to accelerate high-impact innovation in educator preparation. Supported by a \$10,000 investment from the Jennings and Rebecca Jones Foundation, the one-semester pilot will fund faculty, staff, and student projects that advance instructional innovation, strengthen district partnerships, and prepare future educators to meet emerging PreK–12 needs—including differentiated instruction, support for gifted and advanced learners, and responsible integration of artificial intelligence in teaching.

Honors College

The Honors College and MTSU's American Democracy Project



received a \$25,000 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) "Celebrating America" grant, a **significant award that will support the University's preparations for the United States' semiquincentennial celebration** throughout 2026. This grant strengthens MTSU's commitment to exploring America's founding era through public-facing humanities programming and student engagement. As part of this initiative, the MTSU Foundation has established a matching fund endowment to expand the reach and longevity of these efforts. In recognition of the nation's 250th anniversary, the Honors College is inviting supporters to contribute \$17.76, a symbolic gift that helps unlock the full potential of the NEH award and ensures these programs continue to grow. Find out more online at amerdem.mtsu.edu/mtsu-250.

Funding from the grant and matching endowment will help expand a series of events leading into the anniversary year, including the Honors Buchanan Lecture Series "Revolutions," a campus partnership with Nashville PBS featuring screenings and discussions of the Ken Burns documentary *The American Revolution*, and an Evacuation Day commemoration, which includes historical printings on MTSU's replica Franklin press and a public reading of the Declaration of Independence preamble. Additional programming will continue into Fall 2026 with the "Legacies of the American Revolution" lecture series and community-centered historical presentations.

College of Liberal Arts

MTSU Theatre alumnus **Cal Mitchell** visited MTSU while in the Nashville area to perform as Lion in *The Wiz* at the Tennessee Performing Arts Center last September.



The Forensic Institute for Research and Education hosted forensic expert **Eric Bartelink** last fall for his lecture "Sifting Through the Ashes: Recovery and Identification of Wildfire Victims."

The Albert Gore Research Center hosted an **exhibit highlighting the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II**, featuring letters, photos, and artifacts that tell stories from the war's final year.

Dean Leah Tolbert Lyons completed the Fulbright International Education Administrators Program in France, strengthening international partnerships and expanding opportunities for students and faculty.

Walker Library

Since 2022, Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) courses at MTSU **have saved students a cumulative \$2.84 million**. In Summer 2025 alone, ZTC courses accounted for 8% of all course offerings, saving students approximately \$105,000. Total savings are expecting to exceed \$3 million after finalization of Fall 2025 data.

Walker Library **awarded a second round of Affordable Course Materials Grants** for the 2025–26 academic year. These faculty-led projects are expected to save MTSU students more than \$203,000 annually by replacing high-cost textbooks with open or no-cost alternatives.

Collection Development and Management licensed a new ProQuest subscription that gives MTSU students, faculty, and staff access to **essentially all subscription research databases and primary sources available from ProQuest**. ProQuest Central Premium is an interdisciplinary academic database with thousands of scholarly and popular journals, newspapers, and more in all major subject areas. Additionally, we purchased 1,500 new print books and provided access to 244,009 new e-books and 36,925 streaming videos.



RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES

In late 2025, MTSU launched the Quantum Research, Interdisciplinary Science, and Education (QRISE) Center, a world-class hub for advancing quantum discovery, innovation, education, workforce development, and economic growth.



QRISE prepares students to become leaders in the rapidly evolving quantum world and equips them for the careers of the future. The center serves as a catalyst for innovation by connecting academia, industry, and government to strengthen Tennessee's role in the national quantum ecosystem, expand economic opportunity, and position MTSU as the driving force of scientific and technological progress.

MTSU is classified by Carnegie as an R2 research university (the largest public R2 university in Tennessee), characterized by "high research spending and doctorate production"—a recognition earned by only 3% of colleges and universities nationwide. Such research endeavors are buoyed by graduate students' working hand in hand with top faculty. MTSU has aggressively transitioned from a primarily undergraduate institution to a doctoral research university with significant research activity. MTSU's College of Graduate Studies offers 100-plus diverse graduate programs at the certificate, master's, specialist, and doctoral levels.

Here are some recent updates on our Graduate Studies efforts:

Graduate Enrollment Snapshot

As of Jan. 22, graduate enrollment stands at 2,406 students. This figure represents an increase compared to the same time last year, signaling continued momentum in our recruitment and retention efforts as we begin the spring semester.



Lightning Track: Accelerated Pipeline Growth

The Lightning Track accelerated admission pathway continues to scale, expanding from 11 students in Spring 2025 to 67 in Fall 2025. Now active in 42 graduate programs, the initiative is successfully strengthening early recruitment and streamlining access for qualified undergraduates.

Grad-AI: Supporting Graduate Curricular Innovation

Grad-AI is an initiative supporting graduate faculty in developing discipline-specific, ethical AI applications within their curriculum. The initiative will formally launch in Spring 2026. Graduate Studies extends thanks to the representatives from all colleges whose leadership made this cross-disciplinary framework possible. Faculty may pursue one of three pathways—Enhance, Create, or Certify—to fund curriculum updates or new certificate development.

MTSU Graduate Fair: Pathways to Success

On March 17, the College of Graduate Studies—in partnership with the Career Development Center and The Next Chapter Student Association—will host the 2026 Graduate Fair. This event is designed to connect undergraduate students with graduate program pathways, career outcomes, and support services.

Launching in 2026: M.S. in Legal Studies

MTSU is proud to introduce the Master of Science in Legal Studies, launching Summer 2026 in partnership with the Nashville School of Law. This 30-credit program offers specialized tracks in business, entertainment, and compliance for professionals seeking legal literacy without a J.D. The degree directly addresses middle Tennessee's workforce demands by equipping leaders with essential regulatory expertise. Learn more at mtsu.edu/program/legal-studies-ms-business-law.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Our world-class Career Development Center is our campus hub offering students resources for career exploration, skill-building, job searches, and employer connections while providing services like career counseling, résumé help, internship support, career fairs, and online platforms to link them with opportunities.

I consider it our job as a faculty and administration to help facilitate students' smooth transitions from academics to successful employment. Our colleges do this, as do many other programs and initiatives across campus.

Our wonderful staff at the Career Development Center work hard every day to empower all students with the tools and strategies they need to discover and engage in meaningful work and a purposeful life after their time here at MTSU is done. Through education, advising, and industry collaborations, they inspire students to become lifelong managers of their careers while strengthening a diverse, inclusive, and equitable campus community of support.

During the Fall 2025 semester, the center served more than 140 classrooms, impacting more than 3,800 students. The Career Advising **team conducted more than 1,100 individual appointments**, and Peer Career Ambassadors completed 740 document reviews through the Document Drop program.

Student engagement, though, extended far beyond the classroom, with more than **3,500 students participating in eight on-campus career fairs**, including a large all-campus fair and several specialty departmental fairs (and an additional 195 students engaging in collaborative events with campus partners).

The center also saw strong engagement with Handshake, a job management platform. Nearly 4,000 students logged in during the semester, and **approximately 3,700 students submitted applications through the system**. In October alone, more than 20,000 jobs were posted, with health care, internet/software, and nonprofit organizations emerging as the most represented industry sectors.



ATHLETICS

Athletics consistently achieves championship success, postseason play, and student success. In 2025, our athletics department also made major strides in the Build Blue Campaign, as well as continued momentum in facility enhancements. Here are some highlights:



MTSU, Cincinnati, Maryland, Northwestern, Notre Dame, Pittsburgh, and Temple earned the **American Football Coaches Association's 2025 Academic Achievement Award**. All seven schools shared the highest graduation rate for members of their 2018 freshman football student-athlete classes (based on a six-year graduation window for student-athletes.) Blue Raiders head coach Derek Mason was honored along with head coaches of all the winning schools during the 2026 AFCA Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, on Jan. 11.

Football wasn't the only sport that excelled in the classroom. During the Fall 2025 semester, 12 of 15 MTSU teams had a semester team grade point average of 3.0 or higher; 155 student-athletes made the Dean's List (3.5+ GPA); and 54 posted a perfect 4.0. Overall, **246 of 359 student-athletes had a 3.0 or higher (69%)**. The 69% is the highest fall semester since MTSU joined Conference USA in 2013.

MTSU's **NCAA Graduation Success Rate for 2024–25 was at an impressive 94 percent**, as announced last November. It's the seventh straight year MT has scored 92% or better. The Graduation Success Rate (GSR) is a six-year measure of freshmen and athletic transfers who entered the University as freshmen in 2018–19. This marks the 13th straight year that MTSU has scored above 80%. The last 13 GSR scores have been 94, 94, 95, 94, 93, 93, 92, 89, 88, 87, 87, 87, and 82. The Blue Raiders also joined Liberty with the highest score in Conference USA, while Delaware was next with a 93. MTSU had seven programs score a perfect 100: men's basketball, women's golf, softball, soccer, men's tennis, women's tennis, and volleyball. Baseball, women's cross country and track, and football were next in line with impressive scores of 93, 93, and 92, respectively. The Blue Raiders' 92 in football was second only to Liberty's 93 in Conference USA. Among all Football Bowl Subdivision schools in the state of Tennessee, the Blue Raiders ranked first ahead of Vanderbilt (90), Memphis (88), and Tennessee (79).



In 2025, MTSU officially opened the new **Stephen and Denise Smith Student-Athlete Performance Center**. The three-story, 85,000-square-foot facility serves as the new home for Blue Raider football while also providing premier training, nutrition, and sports medicine amenities for all MTSU student-athletes. It is the centerpiece of Phase I of the Build Blue Campaign, a \$25 million private fundraising initiative to transform the athletic facilities at MTSU. This facility represents an investment not only in our student-athletes' performance but also in their health, well-being, and future success both on and off the field.



Men's cross country claimed the Conference USA Championship in November, fulfilling their preseason projection as conference favorites. Reigning All-American sophomore Allan Kiplagat led the Blue Raiders with his second consecutive CUSA individual title, finishing six seconds ahead of the field in 23:34.82 to secure back-to-back championships.

Kiplagat was later named Conference USA Men's Athlete of the Year for the second consecutive year. Meanwhile, MTSU's Keith Vroman was awarded his fifth CUSA Men's Coach of the Year honor, bringing his career total to 10 CUSA coach of the year awards, including five on the women's side. Lastly, Moses Lekokei was named the top newcomer in the conference.

Women's golf graduate student **Abbie Lee was named a Top 30 honoree for the 2025 NCAA Woman of the Year award**. The 30 honorees consist of 10 student-athletes from each NCAA division. Each finalist was selected for her outstanding achievements in academics, athletics, community service, and leadership. Lee, who received the President's Award at the 2025 Raiders Choice Award, graduated summa cum laude in Spring 2025 with her degree in Mechatronics Engineering and a minor in Mathematics.



MTSU ONLINE/NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS

More than 2,400 of MTSU's undergraduate students are 25 or older.

Expanding service to nontraditional students represents one of the most significant opportunities to offset anticipated declines in the number of traditional-age college students over the next few years.

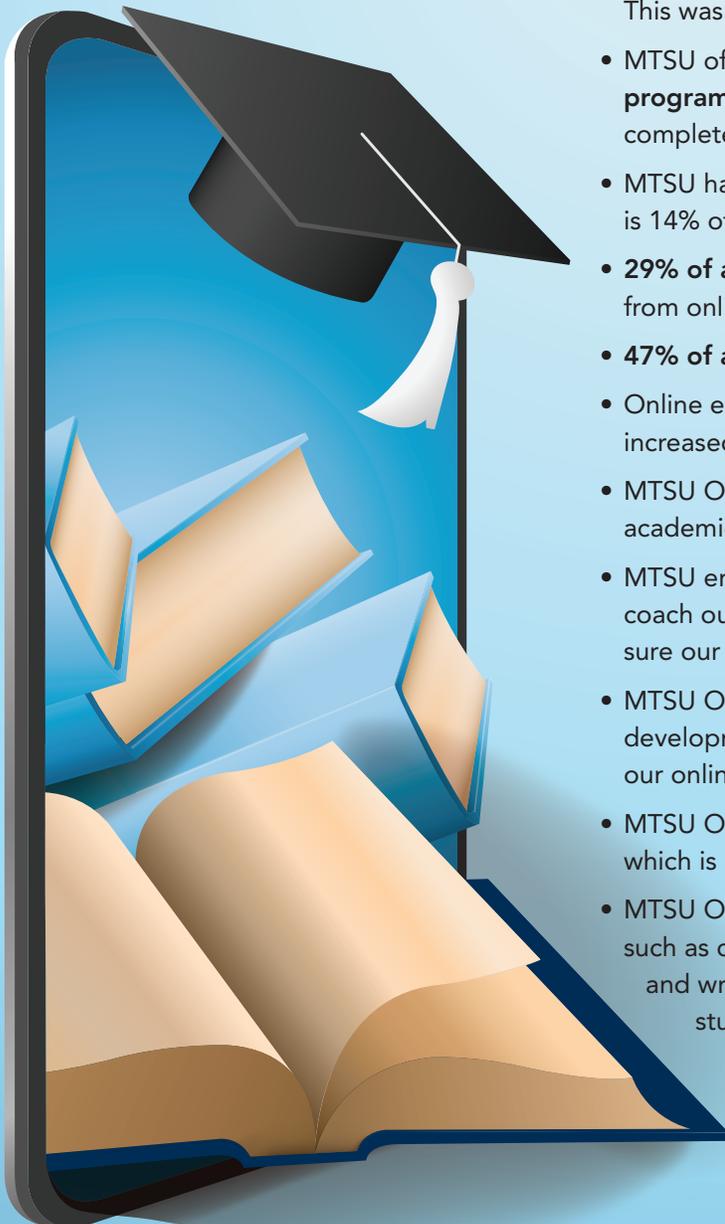
This has been an outstanding year for growth at MTSU Online. Our dedicated team has facilitated the addition of 15 new online degrees and certificates this year. And we continue to see increases in the number of online courses, student credit hours, sections, and fully online students (now more than 3,000 students).

The MTSU Online team has made significant contributions to the project of moving from the D2L learning management system to Instructure Canvas starting this summer. As part of the continuous partnership with the faculty and students, the team is creating and providing teaching and learning resources and live support to help everyone succeed in this new environment

Our MTSU Online team includes David Babb, Hangmin Zhang, Tara Perrin, Karen Hein, Tim Oneal, Tonya Dowd, Carol Hayes, RaeAnne Pardue, and Trey Martindale.

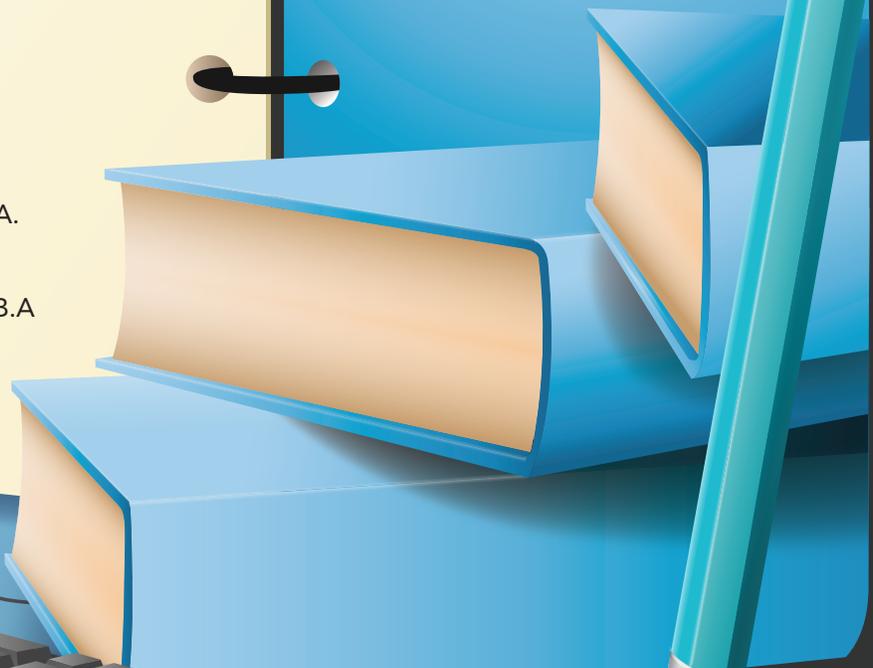
Here are some quick facts about MTSU Online:

- **57% of MTSU students** took at least one online course in Fall 2025. This was over 12,000 students.
- MTSU offers **83 fully online degrees, concentrations, and certificate programs**. We had 24 in 2019. MTSU also has 37 minors that can be completed fully online.
- MTSU had over **3,000 fully online students** in Fall 2025, which is 14% of the total student headcount.
- **29% of all MTSU student credit hours (SCH)** in Fall 2025 were from online courses.
- **47% of all graduate SCH** in Fall 2025 were from online.
- Online enrollment (student credit hours) is at an **all-time high** and has increased for several consecutive years.
- MTSU Online **supports 28 full-time temporary faculty** in 18 academic departments who focus on high-quality online teaching.
- MTSU employs **four full-time instructional designers** who train and coach our faculty on effective teaching and technology use to make sure our students are receiving high-quality online instruction.
- MTSU Online supports **many faculty services**, including faculty development and training workshops, and peer mentoring, to make our online courses highly effective.
- MTSU Online courses feature **engaging interaction with our faculty**, which is known to increase student retention and degree completion.
- MTSU Online supports **key student services for online students**, such as counseling services, 24/7 live subject tutoring, library services, and writing center tutors, all of which are significant contributors to student retention and degree completion.



**Fully online degrees and certificates
launched in calendar year 2025 are:**

- Business Administration,
Data Analytics concentration, M.B.A.
- Business Administration,
IT Project Management concentration, M.B.A.
- Cybersecurity Management, B.S.
- Data Science, graduate certificate
- Digital Media, M.S.
- History, B.S./B.A.
- Information Systems, M.S.
- Information Systems,
Business Intelligence and
Analytics concentration, M.S.
- Information Systems,
IT Project Management concentration, M.S.
- Journalism,
Media Studies concentration, B.S.
- Marketing, B.B.A.
- Marketing,
Digital Marketing concentration, B.B.A.
- Marketing,
Professional Selling concentration, B.B.A.
- Project Management, M.S.
- Public Health, B.S.



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE/ OFFICE OF STUDENT SUCCESS

**Student success remains my
No. 1 priority at MTSU.**

Through the years, we have established a number of proven strategies to boost our students' ability to persist to graduation.

Here are some updates:

Advancing Student Success through Integrated Academic Support



Through intentional, student-centered academic support initiatives, the Office of Student Success continues to advance the University's commitment to persistence, engagement, and degree completion by meeting students

where they are and providing timely, integrated support across learning environments.

The inaugural **Raider Study Rally** drew more than 100 students to a high-impact, finals-focused event led by the Office of Student Success. The event brought together academic tutoring, supplemental instruction (SI) leaders, learning assistants (LAs), and learning support resources in a single, welcoming space, advancing the University's commitment to student-centered, integrated support structures outlined in Strategic Plan 2035, which promotes persistence and completion. By proactively engaging students at a critical point in the semester, the event strengthened help-seeking behaviors and academic confidence. The Raider Study Rally also demonstrated the power of cross-unit collaboration and established a scalable model for expanding equitable, high-touch academic support that advances student success and institutional goals.

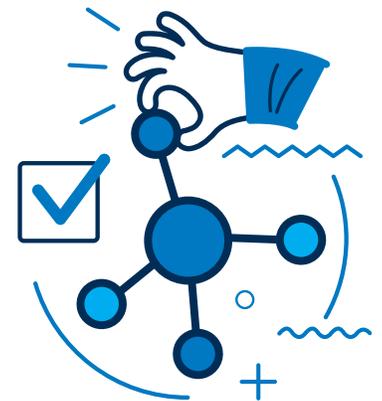
Building on this momentum, the Office of Student Success continues to strengthen academic support through **embedded, peer-led models** that extend beyond co-curricular programming and directly into the classroom experience. During Fall 2025, the learning

assistant (LA) program continued to grow, with 20 learning assistants working alongside six instructors across CHEM 1110, BIOL 1110, and MATH 1000. These LAs played an integral role in the classroom by facilitating active learning, supporting student engagement, and providing instructors with valuable feedback on how students were interacting with course material. Each week, LAs participated in training with Katy Hosbein, assistant professor of Chemistry, to strengthen their skills in facilitating learning, building classroom community, and serving as approachable peer mentors. In addition to their classroom roles, LAs met weekly with instructors to reflect on student progress, refine course activities, and develop strategies to enhance student learning. As the program enters its fourth academic year, it is now housed in and supported by the Office of Student Success, following earlier support from the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, the departments of Chemistry and Biology, and the Tennessee Board of Regents.

The Office of Student Success also awarded **Peer Mentor Scholarships** to nine students in recognition of their academic excellence and demonstrated leadership at MTSU.

Blue Raider Academic Advising Network and Advisor Mastery Program

The Fall 2025 semester marked a strong start for the Blue Raider Academic Advising Network (BRAAN) and the Advisor Mastery Program (AMP), with continued emphasis on advisor development, collaboration, and student success.



AMP professional development programming **focused on leadership development**, including adaptability, strategic thinking, decision-making, problem-solving, and emotional intelligence. These skill areas support advisors in navigating complex student situations and evolving institutional expectations while maintaining a student-centered approach.

Since the start of the fall semester, AMP has offered 16 training and professional development events. Advisor engagement remained high, with **97% of academic advisors participating** in at least one AMP event. From Aug. 25 through Dec. 11, academic advisors completed 20,987 advising appointments, supporting 14,801 unique students. Advisors also contributed to national and regional conversations on advising and student success through conference presentations and professional engagement. The fall semester included continued progress in advisor career advancement, with three academic advisors promoted to advanced academic advisor. Together, these efforts reflect a collaborative and leadership-driven academic year and establish a strong foundation for continued advisor development and student success in Spring 2026.



University Studies

The University Studies Department continues to report **strong outcomes in prescribed courses and undergraduate**

programs. Of the 2,756 enrollments in prescribed courses during Fall 2025, more than 82% were successful. This achievement is particularly notable given that approximately 75% of these students were first-time freshmen. The Integrated Studies undergraduate program also continues to produce graduates at one of the highest rates on campus, with 77 graduates in the Fall 2025 class.

During Fall 2025, the department welcomed **two new tenure-track faculty members**, Megan Hardin and Leigh Johnson, who bring extensive experience and expertise to the University.

Christina Cobb was named **president-elect of the National Organization for Student Success** and will be formally voted in at the organization's national conference in February. Cobb also serves as president of EducateHer, an organization dedicated to educating and uplifting women of all ages.

Members of the MTSU community are invited to participate in the **upcoming EducateHer Professional Development Day.**

Adult Degree Completion Program

MTSU continues to expand its commitment to adult learners through several new initiatives. This past semester marked the rollout of the EAB Adult Degree Completion Program Communication Plan, a **targeted outreach**



strategy developed in collaboration with partners at EAB. Early results indicate continued growth in inquiries from prospective adult students, signaling increased interest in returning to finish a degree at MTSU. The University also introduced a dedicated **adult learner version of the New to Blue orientation**, launching in Fall 2025. This customized experience highlights services, resources, and support systems designed specifically for adults balancing education with work, family, and other responsibilities. As this orientation continues to evolve, it will serve as an essential guide for adult students throughout their MTSU journey. Together, these efforts strengthen the University's ability to meet adult learners where they are by offering timely information, personalized guidance, and a clear pathway to achieving academic goals.

MTSU's Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) program continues to serve as a powerful pathway for adult learners to **translate real-world experience into academic progress.** For nearly two decades, the program has recognized college-level learning gained outside the traditional classroom through work experience, military service, and professional training. To date, 1,381 students have completed the PLA process, earning 29,069 credit hours, an average of 24 credit hours per student. PLA has also expanded into graduate studies, with 55 portfolios approved and 252 graduate credit hours awarded.

The program remains a national model for recognizing learning that occurs beyond the classroom.

Corporate Partnerships

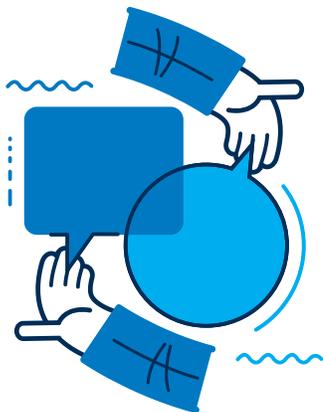
MTSU's corporate education partnerships are entering 2026 with strong momentum. The Fall 2025 semester delivered significant gains, with **enrollment rising 33% over Fall 2024**.



Graduation numbers also increased, with 53 corporate partner employees earning MTSU degrees in 2025, bringing the total number of program graduates beyond the 100-graduate milestone. This progress is carrying forward into the new year. Spring 2026 enrollment has already reached 87 students, positioning the program to exceed prior spring totals.

GraduateMT

The GraduateMT program continues to change lives through its commitment to supporting adult learners returning to college. What began in 2018 as an initiative to reengage students who had stepped away from college has grown into a transformative effort that demonstrates it is never too late to complete a degree. To date, **more than 1,700 students have returned to MTSU** and earned their diplomas through GraduateMT.



Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment (DE) experienced another record-breaking enrollment for Fall 2025. In Fall 2025, there were 2,586 (duplicated) students in DE courses. By headcount, DE students represent **8.75% of all MTSU undergraduate**

students. DE has become a major part of the enrollment portfolio, with students at 19 partner schools enrolled

in 136 course sections. About two of every three DE courses are instructed by MTSU faculty and the other third by qualified high school adjuncts.

Beginning in the spring term, a **new aviation partnership with Sumner County Schools** will allow students from several Sumner County high schools to participate in a cohort taking two AERO courses each semester at the Innovation Center in Hendersonville. Aerospace courses **also will be offered at Tullahoma High School** for the first time.

Summer and Winter Sessions 2025–26

MTSU summer sessions provide a comprehensive and balanced selection of high-quality academic course offerings to support undergraduate and graduate degree progress, encourage innovation, and remain academically integrated and financially viable components of the University.

Over the past five years (2021–25), summer sessions have included 66,535 enrollments across more than 6,900 courses. Summer offerings consist of nine sessions: four three-week



sessions, two five-week sessions, two six-week sessions, and one full-term 12-week session.

Over the past five years, summer sessions have **generated nearly \$97 million in total revenues**, with nearly \$38 million earned by faculty and about \$59 million generated for the general fund.

Now in its sixth year, the winter session offers online-only, accelerated coursework during a three-week term over the holiday break. Between 2020 and 2024, the winter session recorded 4,083 enrollments across 288 courses. Winter 2025–26 included more than 65 courses with a projected enrollment of 840-plus. Winter sessions have become an important part of curricular offerings, serving students, faculty, and the institution.

NEW LOOK FOR MTSU.EDU HOMEPAGE

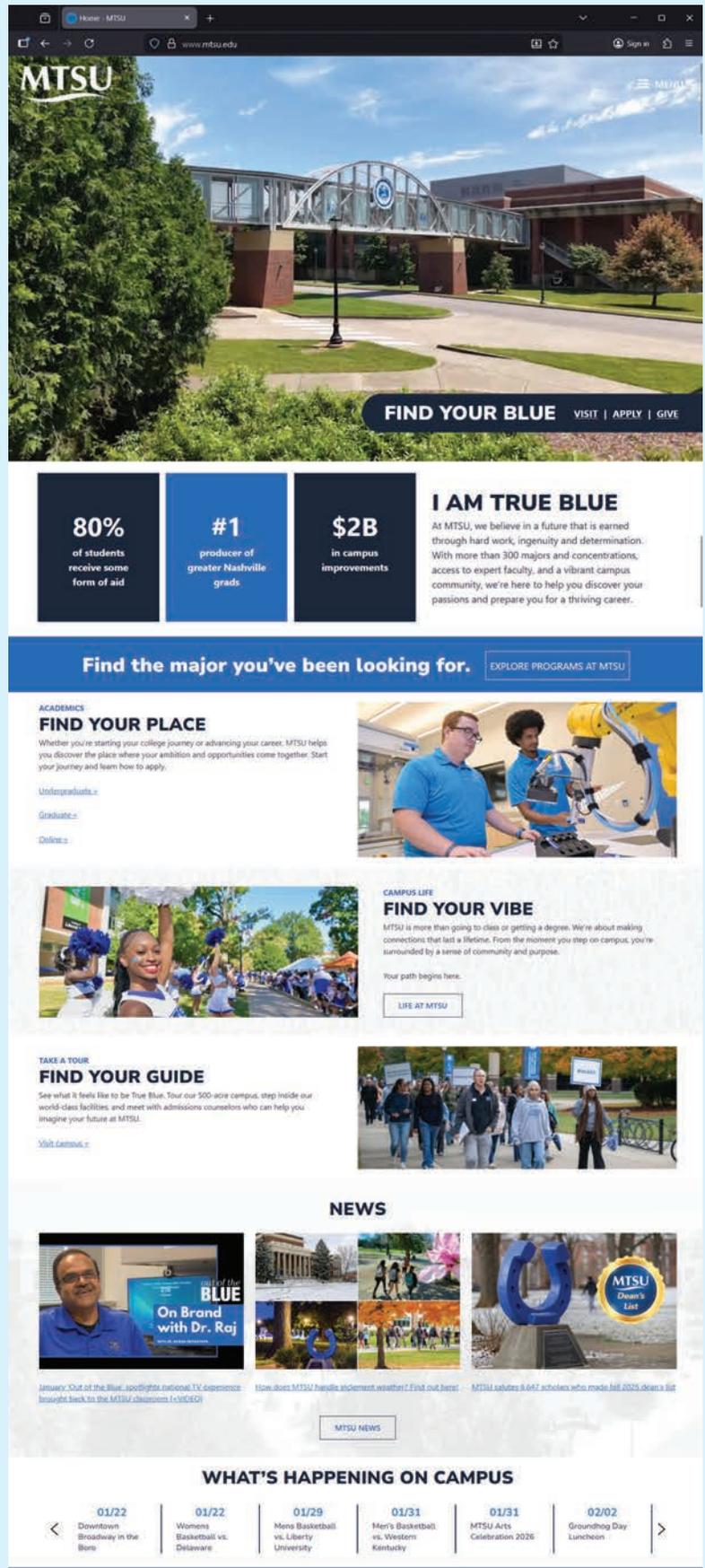
As you may have noticed, the homepage of MTSU.edu has a refreshed look. After months of research into industry best practices, reviewing peer university websites, and collaboration with Information Technology, Marketing and Communications, and Admissions, we launched the new design a few days ago.

While our website serves many internal and external communities, the primary focus of this update is to make the homepage more compelling and targeted to prospective students. MTSU.edu is our largest tool to promote the image and brand of the University—and this new look shows prospects why we're the right fit.

Of course, MTSU.edu remains a go-to resource for our employees and current students. Here's how to find some of the more popular links:

- The top navigation "sandwich" menu features quick links designed to be most helpful for prospective students and their families, institutional supporters, and those looking for athletics information and events. It also includes links to the A to Z Index and Pipeline.
- The most popular internal links are now located in the footer, providing easier access with a much shorter scroll. This includes links to the A to Z Index, Email, Pipeline, and MT One Stop.

My thanks to all involved in this upgrade. Please feel free to reach out to our vice president for marketing and communications, Andrew Oppmann, with any feedback at andrew.oppmann@mtsu.edu.



MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
True BLUE
PATHWAY
FOUR THE FUTURE

Follow us [f](#) [in](#) [X](#) [@](#) [v](#)

Quick Links
 A to Z Index
 Board of Trustees
 Campus Safety
 Careers
 Contact Us
 DOL
 Email

FAQs
 Important Disclosure Information
 Jobs at MTSU
 Library
 MT One Stop
 Parent / Guardian Payment
 How to Reset Passwords

Pipeline MT
 Privacy Policy
 Resources
 Schedule an Advising Appointment
 Transfer Pathways
 True Blue Core
 University Police

ADVANCEMENT

Our alumni base and friends of the University always answer the rallying call for our Blue Raider family to invest in the people and programs that define the character of MTSU.

Each year, MTSU honors individuals who have been steady, loyal, and consistent in their support of the University by inducting them into our Signal Society. Named after our school's first newspaper, *The Signal*, this recognition is reserved for those who have made a financial contribution to the University—one gift, any size, every year—for 20 years or more.

As of December, we have over **1,400 current members of the Signal Society**, most of whom started with a gift of \$25 a year or \$10 a month. Collectively, they have given more than 132,600 gifts totaling more than \$28 million dollars.

What began as modest, intentional gifts grew year by year into scholarships awarded, programs strengthened, and opportunities expanded for thousands of students, faculty, and staff. The Signal Society stands as proof that when people invest consistently in their community, even the smallest beginnings can create extraordinary change.

The **True Blue Give 2026, scheduled for February 10–12**, is powered by belief in our students, our mission, and each other. Like the Signal Society, it celebrates what's possible when our community comes together.

After our strongest year in 2025, raising over \$1 million dollars, the gratitude, momentum, and shared commitment of our supporters have set the stage for an even greater impact this year. With your participation,

True Blue Give 2026 will go even further in supporting students and programs across campus. We invite you to join us in this tradition of generosity and gratitude and make True Blue Give 2026 our best year yet! Choose your area of support, make a gift, and invite others to participate at tbg.mtsu.edu.

MTSU received an extraordinary gift in 2025.

Visionary **music executive Scott Borchetta made a major financial gift** that led to the renaming of MTSU's College of Media and Entertainment—home to one of America's top music business schools—to the Scott Borchetta College of Media and Entertainment.

Borchetta's legendary career includes the 2005 signing of then-unknown artist Taylor Swift to his independent record label. He is the founder, chair, and CEO of Big Machine Label Group, Nashville's leading independent record label, that has been home to superstars including Swift, Garth Brooks, Tim McGraw, Dolly Parton, and Reba McEntire, among others.

The generous donation from Borchetta promises to amplify MTSU's critical role in supplying the media and entertainment industries with ready-to-work graduates and future leaders.

This renaming is a truly historic event and a project that was years in the making.

As one of Music City's leading entrepreneurs and visionaries, Borchetta has earned the reputation as one of the entertainment industry's most innovative and forward-thinking leaders. A gift like this is what happens when one's vision and passion combine with dedication and hard work.



SCOTT BORCHETTA COLLEGE of MEDIA and ENTERTAINMENT





Charlie Daniels Jr. and Hazel Daniels

DANIELS CENTER ANNIVERSARY

The **Charlie and Hazel Daniels Veterans and Military Family Center** celebrated a decade of service in 2025! Its grand opening was Nov. 5, 2015.

Now a **major expansion is set to take place** that will combine first- and third-floor spaces (bringing together all but one member of the Daniels Center's staff, a career counselor who is embedded in the Career Center and is charged with assisting military-connected students). It will also create new space for growth, increasing the center's square footage from 3,200 to 4,079 square feet. Construction will begin during spring break and will conclude this summer in time for the start of school.

The **Charlie Daniels Legacy Wall** has already been **installed** at the front entrance.

The University has a long tradition of aiding veterans in the transition from military to civilian life. Student enrollment now surpasses 1,200 regularly. Everything a student veteran needs to succeed is available through the center, from getting advice on courses and completing government paperwork to getting questions answered about benefits and employment opportunities.

But the **Daniels Center can assist any military-connected person**—no MTSU affiliation is necessary. There is no charge, either.

We serve everyone in the military community—veterans, current service members, dependents, spouses, JROTC and ROTC cadets, MTSU students, and those unaffiliated with MTSU.

This unrestricted mission has not changed since we opened the center's doors.

The work the center does goes beyond degree-seeking. It offers employment services, mental health services, and direct connectivity to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

In addition to Daniels Center staff, two VA employees—a full-time mental health counselor and a VetSuccess on Campus counselor—and two full-time state employees, both Veterans Service Officers, are stationed at the center. We have in fact become a field office for the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services.

We also now **routinely host VA benefits workshops** both for the community and for companies bringing in their veterans as a group.

MTSU's retired three-star general, Keith Huber, who retired from 38 years in the U.S. Army, 14 of them as a general officer—and the last two as a commanding general in Afghanistan—and Daniels Center Director Hilary Miller have led the center to great heights over the past decade.

Entering its second decade, the Daniels Center keeps expanding in scope, reach, funding, and physical space to help both military-connected students at MTSU and American veterans across the globe.

FREE SPEECH CENTER

The Free Speech Center at MTSU is a nonpartisan, nonprofit public policy center dedicated to building understanding of the five freedoms of the First Amendment through education, information, and engagement.

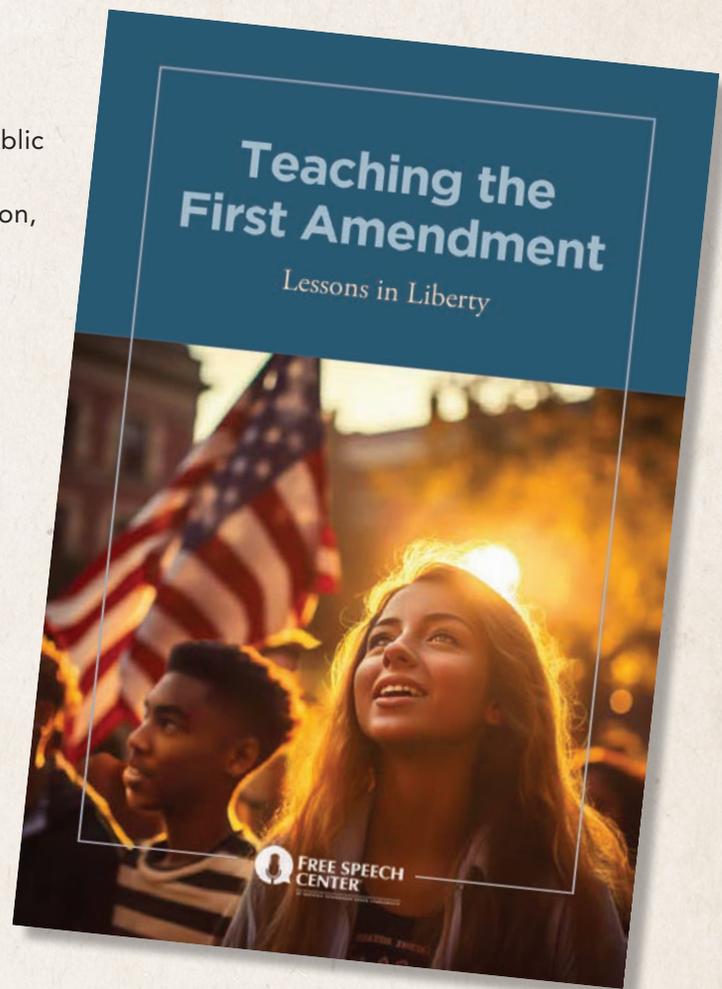
Teaching the First Amendment, a new guide to sharing the core principles of free expression with students, has recently been published by the Free Speech Center as part of its educational outreach.

The electronic book offers a highly accessible guide to incorporating First Amendment education into existing courses or in stand-alone lessons. Each of the five First Amendment freedoms is explained and explored with an emphasis on conveying these key principles to the next generation of citizens.

Authors are Ken Paulson, director of the Free Speech Center; John Vile, dean of the MTSU Honors College; and Deborah Fisher, acting director of the John Seigenthaler Center for Excellence in First Amendment Studies.

The book was released in November at the annual journalism conference of the National Scholastic Press Association and the Associated Collegiate Press.

The e-book is being made available to educators, students, and the public through a free download on the Free Speech Center's site at firstamendment.mtsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2025/11/First-Amendment-Book_FINAL.pdf.



REMAINING VIGILANT

Ever wondered where to report discrimination or harassment?

Visit the Office of Civil Rights Compliance website at crc.mtsu.edu for concerns related to race, color, ethnic/national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, genetic information, or natural/protective hairstyles. Not all cases require investigation, but there may be other assistance available.

Concerned about possible financial improprieties related to spending or reporting, internal control matters, suspected fraud or the appearance of fraud, or asset control matters and similar areas of concern? Visit Audit Services at audit.mtsu.edu for more information and to take action.

If you are not sure where an issue needs to be reported, reach out to either office for assistance finding the right spot on campus.



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The latest analysis from NAFSA, the Association of International Educators, found that international students studying at U.S. colleges and universities **contributed \$42.9 billion to the U.S. economy** and supported 355,736 jobs during the 2024–25 academic year.

Tennessee attracted 11,261 international students who **contributed \$384.8 million to the state economy** and supported 3,344 jobs.

This data confirms that international students provide social and cultural benefits to our campus, helping our region's economy remain healthy and sound.

For Fall 2025, MTSU had approximately **656 international students enrolled from 77 different countries**. This is a slight decrease, about 1%, from Fall 2024.

Welcoming these students from different cultures, religions, and backgrounds isn't just the right thing to do. It benefits our campus, community, and state in terms of our economy, our cultural richness, and the career readiness of our students.

During the 2024–25 academic year, **274 MTSU students participated in education abroad programs**, representing seven MTSU colleges. Looking ahead, the Office of Education Abroad aims to boost participation across all colleges.

Our **Faculty-Led Signature Programs are excellent options for students to study abroad** and are among our most popular offerings. During the 2024–25 academic year, scholarships totaling over \$331,000 were awarded to students. This includes five students who received the esteemed Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship.

The Office of Education Abroad strives to continue these efforts and in doing so helps to meet the workforce needs of Tennessee.



TRUE BLUE TV/EVENT PRODUCTIONS

True Blue TV Event Productions (TBTVEP) continues expanding its capabilities to better serve the University's production needs.

True Blue TV Event Productions employs a small full-time professional staff and more than 100 student workers who are integral to the production of the many events on campus.

Our student workers not only earn a competitive wage, but they also gain valuable experience to supplement the formal education they receive at MTSU.

True Blue TV Event Productions is responsible for producing all major University events, as well as events for colleges, departments, centers, and other groups and individuals at the University, and off-campus events sponsored by University groups, upon request. These events include concerts, major announcements, fraternity and sorority events, Board of Trustees meetings, Commencement ceremonies, athletic events, signature events, and more.

Due to the increased importance of video assets, TBTVEP has **greatly expanded its video production lineup**. This includes multi-cam capabilities, livestreaming, creation of custom marketing videos, speakers, interviews, and other video needs. TBTVEP has produced videos for the Jones College of Business, Daniels Center, American Democracy Project, Alumni Services, and many other departments and groups on campus.

A **new podcast studio** has been a resource that allows TBTVEP to quickly and easily create video projects for numerous campus groups including Graduate Studies and Philosophy and Religious Studies.

TBTVEP partnered with MTSU Athletics and Murphy Center to develop a new state-of-the-art control room to produce events at Floyd Stadium, Murphy Center, and the new Student-Athletic Performance Center. This, coupled with the new sound system installed in Murphy Center, has raised the standard for event production at MTSU. The partnership with MTSU Athletics has been incredibly valuable to the University community. TBTVEP also produces the Party in the Grove events for home football games.

True Blue TV, meanwhile, has been **focused on improving its programming and offering more livestreaming** of important University events.

True Blue TV recently unveiled free iOS and Android phone apps and a free Amazon Fire TV app to provide MTSU-On-Demand programming to our viewers. They can be found on Amazon.com and in the respective phone stores. These complement our free Roku and Apple TV apps, as well as our website.

true
BLUE
▶TV

*true***BLUE▶TV**
EVENT PRODUCTIONS



BLUE print

A BRANCH OF CREATIVE AND VISUAL SERVICES

What's new in the new year at Blue Print

Blue Print is starting the year strong with a familiar leader back in the mix. Following the departure of Tracey Kennedy, we're excited to welcome Ed Arning back as interim manager under the direction of Kristy O'Neal.

A key player in the launch of Blue Print Solutions in 2013, Arning brings experience, insight, and a get-it-done mindset. Reach out to him for guidance, support, or to keep your projects moving forward—he's ready to jump in.

Your On-Campus Print Powerhouse

Blue Print is MTSU's go-to, on-campus printing resource—where big ideas and small jobs get the same expert care. From mounted posters, yard signs, brochures, booklets, and books to class projects and specialty finishes, no job is too small (or too bold). We also offer laminating, binding, and personalized support to help your work shine.

Need custom T-shirts for a campus event or activity? We've got low-quantity, personalized apparel options ready to go. Working on a personal project? Bring it in. Looking for something we don't currently offer? Tell us—we're always growing with campus needs.

Two Locations. One Powerful Team

The Student Union storefront is the retail face of Blue Print, backed by our full-scale production facility on Greenland Drive—home to high-volume, state-of-the-art equipment producing much of MTSU's printed materials.

Easy Ordering

Students, faculty, and staff can place orders through our online portal using FSA credentials (on campus or connected through MTSU's firewall). Having trouble? Reach out—we're here to help. mtsu.edu/order

Learn more at mtsu.edu/blueprint

Questions? Call [615-898-2100](tel:615-898-2100) or email blue.print@mtsu.edu

Here's to a bright, bold year of printing possibilities—let's make something great together.



FROM THE FIRST LADY'S FAMILY

Our hearts are bowed in sorrow over the passing of our family's matriarch, our beloved mother, grandmother, wife, aunt, friend, and family member, Elizabeth "Liz" McPhee. We have suffered a great loss, and your friendship, support, and acts of kindness have helped sustain us. God bless you all and please accept our thanks as we navigate these difficult times.

—The McPhee Family



Elizabeth "Liz" Lorenza McPhee

FEBRUARY 22, 1953 – JANUARY 8, 2026