Quest 2020 Work Group Accomplishments/Recommendations
April 25, 2024

Work Group #1- Invest in a comprehensive faculty development program that includes the integration of high impact practices in key curricula.

Accomplishments

Summary of Accomplishments of this Quest Committee (WG1)
1. Accomplishment #1: WG1 commissioned COHRE to assess the status and functioning of the LT&ITC, resulting in the [COHRE report](#).
2. Accomplishment #2: WG1 compiled a list of recommendations, together with objectives, recommended actions, and responsible parties, for the university campus with respect to Priority 1. They are published in the [Work Group Recommendations](#) document.
3. Accomplishment #3: Solicit and compile updates from across campus on current (as of Spring 2024) professional development activities that are occurring and have followed from the publication of the COHRE report and the Work Group Recommendations documents.

Updates on Professional Development from Across Campus (i.e., Accomplishment #3)
1. Following the commission of the COHRE report and the recommendation of Strategy 1 (*Create a centralized headquarters for all faculty development (Center for Faculty Development*)) from the Work Group Recommendations, the LT&ITC has engaged in the following structural and leadership initiatives:

    a. Help instructors reflect on and strengthen their teaching skills.
    b. Promote innovative teaching approaches to ensure student success.
    c. Support professional development and career advancement.
    d. Offer teaching observation opportunities.
    e. Share knowledge through workshops and seminars.
    f. Organize writing groups, reading groups, learning communities, and expert panels.
    g. Encourage scholarly productivity.
    h. Share resources and best practices for teaching and learning.
    i. Develop and offer workshops for new faculty and staff. **NEW**
    j. Create digital knowledge banks on the scholarship of teaching and learning. **NEW**
    k. Showcase the excellent work of faculty and staff. **NEW**
        a. Sponsor institutes or conferences on teaching and learning. **NEW**
  i. Facilitate a GTA "boot camp" for teaching and learning. **NEW**
 ii. Deliver an annual conference for MTSU faculty and staff, such as an intensive weekend of workshops with panel and paper presentations and/or a scholar-to-scholar poster session. **NEW**

2. Following the recommendation of Strategy #2 (*Provide tools, trainings, and support for all faculty to create a culture of continual improvement*) from the Work Group Recommendations, the Office of the Provost has engaged in the following initiatives to support faculty development:

a. Leadership on Deck Institute
b. Provost Fellowship Program
c. New Faculty Orientation
d. New Chairs Training and Learning Community
e. Tenure and Promotion Workshops and Summer Retreats
f. AIM- All-Inclusive Mentoring
g. In collaboration with LT&ITC:
    i.   Faculty Fellows Program
    ii. Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs)
    iii. Book Groups
    iv. Associate-to-Full Professor Initiative
    v.   Non-Instructional Assignment Grants

3. Following the recommendation of Strategy #3 (*Provide tools, training, and support for faculty development in the areas of research/creative activity and service*) from the Work Group Recommendations, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs has engaged in the following initiatives to support faculty development in research/grant-writing:

a. Grant-Writing Enhancement Program, including assigned grant mentor/mentee relationships
b. Hanover Pre-Award Support for Grant Writing, including live webinars and one-on-one coaching
c. Q&A Sessions with ORSP (Monthly for campus community)
d. ORSP also welcomes invitations to speak with departments on campus about services offered
e. IRB Training Sessions (Monthly)
f. CITI Modules, e.g., on Grant Writing

4.   Following recommendation of Strategy #4 (*Provide individual, personal, and discipline-specific support for all faculty of all ranks/types*) from the Work Group Recommendations, many colleges and departments are implementing professional development initiatives that are individual, personal, or discipline-specific. Below is a sampling of some of the many individual initiatives, as informed and led by members of WG1:

a.   Connections Course (Team-Teaching)-- new compensation structure to allow for team-teaching (Leah Lyons)-- see blurb here.
b.   Teaching TRIOS - observers as learners (Sarah Bleiler-Baxter)-- see blurb here.
c.   Community-Engaged Pedagogy and Community-Engaged Research– how to gain recognition for T&P (Monica Smith, Bethany Wrye)--see blurb here.
d.   Associate Director and Faculty Fellow Program through the Tennessee STEM Education Research Center (Gregory Rushton, Sarah Bleiler-Baxter)– see blurb here.

Work Group #2- Eliminate achievement gaps by using analytics, refining, and expanding student support programs, and increasing faculty diversity.

1. Recommendation 1: Create a high-touch, multi-member early alert system to increase student persistence and retention rates
   - Challenge: P & R rates are as much as 20% lower in some sub-populations
   - Task: Initial launch should specifically target the Black male population and other sub-populations (e.g., Pell-eligible, students on probation, transfer students)
- Early Alert Program
  - High-student touch
  - Allows all members of success team (advisors and instructors) to be notified
  - Low initial cost – already available through EAB Navigate
  - Has been shown to increase student persistence and retention.
- Short-Term Recommendations
  - Implement early alert program for black, male sub-population of students.
  - Structurally expand program to include other sub-populations (e.g., students on probation, REBOUND, transfer students)
- Long-Term Recommendations
  - Create Team/Office to handle alerts to expand response to information gathering and future recommendations.
  - Peer mentoring program for students with repeated/multiple alerts

2. Recommendation 2: Increase support for existing systems focused on mental health services on campus
   - Challenge: 79% of MTSU students reported moderate to severe psychological distress and 52% of students scored positive on a validated loneliness scale in 2022
   - Task: Link/coordinate systems and structures to create "wrap-around care"

Work Group #3- Increase online, hybrid, and off-site offerings, adaptive scheduling, and curricular flexibility.

Strategy 1: Support the growth of innovative, in-demand online programs while promoting inclusiveness and access within curricular flexibility.

1. Increase the total number of online programs.

- We have added 9 new online programs (degrees, concentrations, and certificates) this calendar year, for a total of 57 fully online programs. These are promoted on the new majors and concentrations pages and on the MTSU Online home page.

2. Increase support for blended course development.

- We implemented a new Synchronous Flex course type, piloted by the College of Education

3. Instructional design

- We added an additional instructional designer to MTSU Online, which helps us grow the number of online courses and programs, and also guide course development to promote inclusivity.

Strategy 2: Enhance the support structures (technical, pedagogical, administrative, etc.) to accelerate expansion of online, hybrid, and off-site courses and programs.

1. Expand the use of open educational resources (OER).

- OER expansion is a major focus of the MTSU Community Engagement Advisory Group.
- MTSU added open educational resources librarian Ginelle Baskin. She publishes a regular newsletter about promoting OER.
- We established an agreement with the MTSU bookstore to accommodate and feature courses using OER materials. The textbook adoption process now facilitates OER use.

2. Clarify and streamline the recruitment and support of adult and returning students, most of whom are entering online programs.

- A University College team led by Peggy Carpenter is now recruiting adult and online students for all the online programs across every college within MTSU.

Strategy 3: Apply data analytics to strategically inform scheduling decisions, program development, and demand.

1. Implemented the use of DegreeWorks Plans to support course planning and space utilization software at the department level.

2. Entered into a partnership with AASCU and Ad Astra for the "Academic Planning for Equitable Success" project. Through this partnership MTSU will be able to analyze our course scheduling and registration data to identify areas of need and opportunities for improvement. The project started in Fall 2023 and runs through Fall 2024.

Work Group #4- Create and support a culture of service through all divisions of the University.

The Quest 2025 Priority #4 is focused on creating a culture of service across campus. One initiative is to provide an online option for members of the MTSU community to recognize another faculty, staff, or student.

We invite you to "Give Kudos" to another individual or team that delivered an outstanding service experience to you. The information provided will be shared with the individual or team identified as well as a direct supervisor. Additionally, we ask you to consider if this information can be shared with others at MTSU. We are excited to be able to help recognize all the amazing work that happens at MTSU.

Other Accomplishments

1. Initiated a Welcome Committee and developed some flyers with helpful information to orient new staff and faculty to MTSU. We participated in the August New Faculty Orientation and shared the information with about 25 new faculty. It was well received and deemed a positive experience.
2. We are working on a regular speaker series focused on "creating a culture of service" at MTSU. This past fall we invited Joey Peay to present on November 16 from 2:40-3:30. He is the CEO of MMC and it was organized in collaboration with the College of Business. We had close to 100 in attendance. We are working on a second speaker but have had a few delays. We hope to have another speaker for the fall.
3. We are moving forward with a mechanism to provide recognition for faculty and staff across campus through a Kudos Form. It has been developed and we are at the point of getting ready to launch it. We were working on some of the technical aspects of tracking on the information sent.

Work Group #5- Invest in a campus-wide environment that fosters living-learning opportunities.

Objective: Attend to the structural/facilities needs of the historic west side of campus
- **Renovations to KOM and Rutledge Hall**
  - Project design is completed. Construction to start in summer 2024 with estimated completion in summer of 2026
  - Project will provide renovations to both KOM and Rutledge Hall
  - KOM Renovation
    - Demolition of the Midgett Building will make way to a new lobby and entry on the north side of the building
    - KOM will continue to serve the Mathematics, Computer Science, and Data Science Departments
  - Rutledge Hall
    - A new entry will be added on the west side of the building and will include an addition of an elevator to the building

- Converted from a student housing into the new home for University College

Objective: Change the name of Forrest Hall
- **Renaming of Forrest Hall**
    - MTSU has requested to the Tennessee Historical Commission to change the name of Forrest Hall.
    - This request will be voted on by the Tennessee Historical Commission on April 27th
    - New name will be "ROTC Building"

Objective: Create additional/newer on-campus housing options
- **New Student Housing Project**
    - Currently working on drafting a RFP solicitation and standards document for a public-private partnership (P3) to provide new student housing
    - Existing Womack Lane student housing to be demolished to provide a site for current and future student housing expansion
    - First phase of development includes new facilities with 500-550 beds on the Womack Lane site
    - RFP for P3 partnership will be advertised in summer 2024