Middle Tennessee State University
Development and University Relations
Restructuring Recommendations

Today’s public colleges and universities face an ever-increasing number of financial challenges that affect both the quality and viability of their programs. With funding historically grounded in state support and tuition, institutions utilized private philanthropy as a means to enhance programs and provide additional student support. As state appropriations have fallen and both the state and its citizenry focus on the escalating costs being absorbed by the student, the role and importance of philanthropy has never been more important in assuring the institution’s commitment to quality and to its students. Once considered a valued accessory, advancement today is an integral part of the University’s plan for success and can provide the means to secure our future.

Simultaneously institutions, like MTSU, have been required to become more efficient and competitive in their pursuit of not only limited philanthropic and federal dollars, but also in their recruitment of the most outstanding students to the campus and in establishing collaborative relationships with key members of the private sector. Much like a private enterprise we are now expected to clearly articulate to multiple audiences the importance and relevance of our mission, the accomplishments of our faculty and students, and the distinct quality of our programs. By positioning the university effectively and establishing an institutional brand, we are able to delineate ourselves in an ever crowded marketplace, enabling us to continue to attract and retain Tennessee’s Best students, faculty and staff.

As we look to the immediate future and the need to assure that operations throughout the University are performed in an efficient, cost effective manner, there are a number of opportunities for consolidation, realignment and restructuring that will enable the University to achieve the above referenced objectives, while at the same time preserving essential or critical services. To achieve this goal we should consider a significant realignment of some previously recognized college/unit responsibilities into a central institution function. By institutionalizing processes and some programs, redundancies can be eliminated and the University will be better positioned to capitalize on the economies of block purchasing.

In addressing the needs of the University, the Division of Development and University Relations naturally divides itself along two primary functions – the traditional advancement program that supports resource development, and external and internal activities dedicated to marketing and communications. We propose that these functions form the basis for a strategic realignment of programs and resources. These two functional and programmatic units could be reconfigured as follows:

**Division of University Advancement**

The Division of University Advancement would manage and support all processes related to external, philanthropic resource development and non-competitive state and federal funding. The activities of the Division would support the overall mission of the institution by focusing on and providing the framework and resource support for a strong fund raising program, increasing
alumni affinity and connectivity, expanding support and collaborative opportunities for business and industry and maintaining sound relationships with state and federal government leaders. The Division would include offices dedicated to:

**Development** – The University has an established constituent based program with development officers assigned to each of the primary academic colleges, with a central administration providing annual fund, planned giving and general scholarship fund raising support. It is anticipated that, as resources grow and funds become available, additional development staff will become necessary. Current funding may require some units with smaller constituencies, i.e. Library, Honors College to share duties and, while not ideal, we have used this model with success.

**Alumni Relations** - The existing Alumni Relations Office and programs would remain intact and expand services to include, as appropriate and as funds become available, programs identified in the Positioning for the Future Steering Committee’s report.

**Advancement Services** – Current staffing is adequate to address the volume of gifts and alumni/donor information processed at this time. Within existing staffing, the office should consider realignment of responsibilities to offer enhanced Prospect Research and Stewardship services as appropriate.

**Business and Industry Relations** – Establishing a new position, proposed as part of the Positioning for the Future process, would enable the University to better serve the needs of the business community and enhance access to their resources. Today’s business environment expects colleges and universities to operate much like a preferred supplier, where each party is expected to provide and benefit from the exchange of resources. This position would support Development, Research, Career Services – including our co-op and internship programs, and Academic Affairs, and would serve as the primary conduit for private sector access to our programs. Justifying this investment comes with the recognition that an effective effort in this area should very quickly result in increased recruitment of graduates, expanded corporate support for projects and research, and an expansion of our base for philanthropic support.

**Government Relations** – Envisioned as a part-time position the incumbent would be responsible for working with the Tennessee Legislature, especially our local delegation; as well as assisting with federal support and appropriations – a need identified in the External Resource Development sub-committee report.

**Division of Marketing and Communications**

The Division of Marketing and Communications would provide campus leadership and support for all external marketing and communications activities. The office would be responsible for developing all policies and procedures related to our communication activities and the services we provide. In addition it would serve as the central coordination point for community relations activities currently performed by the Office of Community Engagement and Support. Centralizing all these functions in one area will enable the University to present a more
consistent message across all audiences. This new division will consist of four distinct functional areas:

**News and Media Relations** – This represents a restructuring of the existing News and Public Affairs Office, increasing their focus on traditional news and media. As we have learned over the last year, it is essential that we have direct, working relationships with the region and state’s key media centers. This office would be the direct link for the campus with all media outlets and, in the absence of the President, serve as the official spokesperson for the institution.

**Creative and Visual Services** - This office would integrate and consolidate resources currently found in five (5) university offices – Publications and Graphics, Photographic Services, News and Public Affairs (MT-Record for television), Printing Services, and Audio-Visual Services (currently housed in the College of Education). The office would operate as an institutionally subsidized, cost recovery unit and would look to expand cost recovery services to both our campus community and fellow TBR institutions. Integrating these related programs would significantly expand the technologies and capabilities to the entire campus and putting them on a total or partial - cost recovery basis would allow them to generate resources to keep equipment updated and available.

**Marketing** – This office would represent a consolidation of the existing Office of University Marketing functions, unit based marketing from across campus, university licensing and related revenue, and the core responsibilities of the Office of Community Engagement and Support. Certain portions of the athletic marketing program may also be included, such as marketing opportunities associated with television exposure, however traditional athletic marketing activities, like game day festivities, should remain in the Athletic Department. This office would coordinate and facilitate all block purchasing of advertising media to assure best pricing and assist individual academic and programmatic units with specific projects for their audiences.

**University Communications** - This new office would be responsible for the content of all official, institution specific communications, including the Alumni Magazine & Alumni Record, the President’s Report, Research magazine and the President’s Office Communication, including speeches and formal presentations. **While advisable to establish as a standalone unit, this office and its functions could be merged with the new Marketing office to better manage administrative costs and increase efficacy. Further evaluation of this would be needed and would need to include discussions on the oversight and management of the University’s website and the long term plans for institutional publications.**

This realignment can be accomplished with minimal changes in staff numbers and would enable us to continue to provide the highest quality service to our campus in the most cost effective manner. While this does represent a significant realignment of personnel and reporting, it will ultimately streamline operations, more clearly define departmental roles, and improve efficiency.