Positioning the University for the Future

Restructuring: Frequently Asked Questions

Section I: During a meeting with the leadership of MTSU’s Chairs Council, I was invited to respond to a set of questions that were being posed by a number of people on campus. I accepted this invitation and have provided responses below. I have taken the liberty to group the questions as they are related to Vision, Outcomes, Process, Budget, Structure, Management & Resources, and Identity. I am answering in third person to emphasize that I am representing Academic Affairs in this process and not Diane Miller. Thanks to Dr. George Riordan and others who compiled these questions.

Section II: Accompanying this response to the campus community is the latest discussion document for restructuring our colleges. The intent is to demonstrate that I am listening and learning from each of the individuals and/or groups that bring forward their ideas for consideration. As the document reflects, not every suggestion is incorporated in the discussion document. I remain committed to providing President McPhee with a proposed model that will indeed position Academic Affairs for the future at the same time we continue to take advantage of our strengths under the restraints of a significantly reduced State budget.

Section I

Vision

Why is restructuring taking place within the university?

According to the MTSU President’s Response to Oversight Steering Committee's (OSC) Report for Positioning the University for the Future dated March 19, 2009 and the final report dated May 21, 2009

- President McPhee appointed an Ad Hoc Study Group comprised primarily of faculty in December 2008 for the purpose of examining the possibility of a realignment of the College of Education and Behavioral Science. This group presented its final report to the president in March 2009. They recommended that the COEBS be realigned to better achieve the President’s goal of “a College of Education attaining a position of state, regional and national leadership.” Consequently, they recommended that COEBS be restructured into a College of Education with the location of the non-COE departments to be determined later. The President accepted the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Study Group; and subsequently, the COEBS will become the COE under the leadership of Dr. Lana Seivers.

- Concurrent with this COE initiative the President charged an “Oversight Steering Committee (OSC) and four strategic work groups with the task of exploring how we could not only address our current budget challenges but also strategically and aggressively strengthen our institution to better meet the current and future needs of our students. As part of that process, the Academic and Instructional Review Workgroup
suggested the consolidation of the University’s six colleges into three.” The OSC did not
support this recommendation but suggested that a review of the existing college structure
be undertaken. The March 19, 2009, preliminary report for Positioning the University for
the Future, recommended a review of the academic college structure.

• In the May 21, 2009 final report, MTSU President’s Response to Oversight Steering
Committee’s (OSC) Report for Positioning the University for the Future, the President
charged the Interim Provost with the task to “work with the appropriate academic
personnel, including deans, department chairs and Faculty Senate representatives, to
review the overall college structure at MTSU” to meet future needs.

How is the current structure flawed?
The current college structure has served the University well over the past several years. It isn’t
necessarily flawed. However, the challenges and opportunities the University currently faces
necessitate a proactive approach to best position it for continuing successes in accomplishing its
mission. The restructuring of the COE coalescing with the Positioning for the Future initiative
presents a unique opportunity to consider how we might better structure the University to meet
these financial challenges and take advantage of the opportunities to move the University
forward in program and student growth. The central question is: What is the college structure
that best supports our mission and sharpens our focus on the Academic Master Plan to
insure that the University is ready to take advantage of the opportunities that the future
brings.

Why are plans for restructuring being undertaken at this time, given the fact that the
university is preparing for major budget cuts, and the future of our governing bodies is
uncertain?
See response above, “Why is restructuring taking place within the university?”

Is restructuring an element in achieving budget reductions? If so, is there a target
amount of savings that need to be derived from restructuring?
The President has stated (in the March 19, 2009 report) that “The focus will be on “Positioning
the University for the Future” rather than “budget cuts”, with our decisions or actions guided by
the Academic Master Plan.” In some cases the University must make investments in selected
areas to stimulate program growth and development. There is not a target amount of savings to
be derived from restructuring.

What were the thoughts and assumptions behind the proposed design?
The Interim Provost introduced the initial proposed college structure in response to the
President’s charge in the May 21, 2009 final report, MTSU President's Response to Oversight
Steering Committee's (OSC) Report for Positioning the University for the Future, to “work with
the appropriate academic personnel, including deans, department chairs and Faculty Senate
representatives, to review the overall college structure at MTSU” to meet future needs. In Dr.
Miller’s introduction to the proposed college structure in an email (10/05/09) to the campus
community, she provided the guiding principles that led her to the initial proposed college structure. Principles that continue to guide the discussions and deliberations follow.

1. The University and TBR have approved a name change for the College of Education and Behavioral Science to the College of Education.
2. The future college structure must position MTSU for the changing dynamics in the nation’s economy and in higher education.
3. The University must continue to meet the changing expectations of its graduates and employers.
4. The proposed colleges must reflect clear purpose and focus.
5. The proposed college structure must have potential for synergy among the academic units within each college.
6. The creation of a University College to focus on the needs of first year students (freshmen & transfers) and those whose path through higher education is nontraditional is essential to increased student success.
7. The current campus community does not want one mega-college that over-shadows the needs and productivity of other colleges.
8. The proposed restructuring may result in cost savings or investments to stimulate program growth and development in selected areas.
9. If possible, the number of colleges should be kept constant.

Outcomes

What are the expected outcomes from restructuring?

- Provide a clear focus for academic units aligned with the goals of the Academic Master Plan: Quality, Student Success, and Partnerships
- Prepare MTSU to anticipate and strategically respond to changing education, demographic and economic needs of the region
- Enhance MTSU’s reputation as an outstanding comprehensive University
- Increase interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching, research and service
- Provide a structure to focus on needs of first year, transfer and nontraditional students
- Increase processing and operating efficiencies without compromising quality

How are these outcomes to be measured?

- Increased access to MTSU for diverse students within and outside the region
- Increased retention rate for first-year, transfer and nontraditional students
- Increased graduation rate for first-year, transfer and nontraditional students
- Increased research productivity
- Increased extramural funding
- Increased partnerships that support the University’s programs and concurrently meet the changing educational, demographic and economic needs within the region, e.g., Mind to Marketplace initiative
- Enhanced instructional practices and alternative methods of delivery
• Enhanced programs strategically selected to become nationally and internationally reputed models, e.g., STEM education, teacher preparation

**Process**

**What is the timetable for restructuring? (Remains flexible)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Last day for campus feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interim Provost disseminates revised proposal for restructuring to campus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interim Provost submits proposed restructuring model to the President</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1</td>
<td>President responds to the Interim Provost’s proposal</td>
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(Restructuring will require TBR approval. A continuation of the timeline will be proposed after May 1st.)

**Is the timetable for restructuring fixed, or is there some flexibility?**

President McPhee has stated that there is some flexibility in the timetable. He has already demonstrated this, for example, when he extended the timeframe for the Interim Provost to submit a restructuring proposal to him by April 1, 2010 rather than the initial December 1, 2009 timeline to permit continuing broad-based discussion and feedback related to restructuring.

**How was the current model for discussion developed?**

The current model was developed over the past nine months and is based on comparative research as well as discussions and meetings with various campus constituencies.

The March 19, 2009, *MTSU President’s Response to Oversight Steering Committee’s (OSC) Report for Positioning the University for the Future Positioning the University for the Future Report*, reflected extensive exploration of the college structure of more than 15 universities that were similar in scope and mission to MTSU. An examination of these universities resulted in a call for a discussion about restructuring MTSU’s colleges.

Following the May 21, 2009 final report, *MTSU President's Response to Oversight Steering Committee’s (OSC) Report for Positioning the University for the Future*, the Interim Provost sought and was provided structured and unstructured feedback through multiple large group discussion meetings with Deans, Associate Deans, the Faculty Senate President, and the Chair of the Chairs Council.

On June 24, 2009, a Deans Retreat was held with the purpose to “Develop ideas about aligning a new structure of colleges to sharpen our focus on the Academic Master Plan.” At a continuation of this meeting on July 29, participants reviewed the retreat report and further defined the nature of the possible list of proposed colleges. Participants then independently developed their own structure of colleges with the programs/departments/schools associated within each college. At a meeting on July 31 with these participants, the Interim Provost sought input about each of their proposed structures of colleges and the programs/departments/schools they associated within...
each so that the group could develop a clear and shared understanding of what was meant by each of their proposals.

Based on this structured input and continuing unstructured feedback she received from across campus, the Interim Provost developed an initial proposed restructuring of colleges which she sent to the University community for discussion on October 5, 2009. Faculty members were encouraged to discuss this proposed model with their department chairs, school directors, their college deans, and/or the Interim Provost.

The Interim Provost also met with department chairs and school directors as well as the Faculty Senate Liaison Committee to discuss the proposed model. Subsequently, the Interim Provost has received on-going input through meetings with various groups from the academic community (e.g., small groups of faculty, entire departments, department chairs, and deans) designed to discuss the proposed restructuring of colleges. Input from these discussions contributed to the continued evolution of the proposed restructuring of colleges.

On November 5, the Interim Provost provided the University community a second version of the proposed restructuring. Some of the changes reflected in the document were based upon proposals submitted and discussions that were on-going. On November 9, the Interim Provost again met with the Faculty Senate to discuss the latest proposed restructuring and to answer questions. The Interim Provost intends that the evolving document will continue to promote discussions related to restructuring among the faculty with their colleagues, their department chairs and/or school directors, deans, and the Interim Provost.

**How will decisions be made about the consolidation of departments into divisions, schools or reorganized departments? Will considerations of size be taken into account (such as number of majors, size of faculty, independent accreditation, or other indicators)?**

The comments made by Dr. Miller under the question “What were the thoughts and assumptions behind the proposed design?” will continue to serve as guiding principles for restructuring. Program accreditation, unit functions, potential synergies for interdisciplinary collaborations, and external funding will also be considered.

**If implementation is to take place by Fall, 2010, how does that affect the development of fall schedules and staffing already under way?**

Full implementation will likely not occur in Fall 2010. Planning for Fall 2010 schedules and staffing should continue as usual.

**Budget**

**Will the proposed design actually result in cost savings?**

Budget reductions were not a primary consideration for the proposed restructuring model. While we must be conscious of cost, we should also focus on suggestions and ideas that will enhance
the academic program offerings of the University and be prepared to invest in a proposed structure that will create new and productive synergies within our academic programs.

Structure, Management & Resources

What effect will restructuring have on:

the autonomy of departments and programs?
Program quality and integrity will have the highest priority in restructuring. The structure under which a program is located will have academic and budget responsibility for the program.

the independence of departmental budgets?
The process for determining departmental/school/college budgets will remain the same.

clerical and aide staffing of departments and the manning of work that will continue in departments?
Clerical and aide staffing of departments/schools/colleges will continue to be based on staffing profiles and needs.

the allocation of TAF dollars, library funds, and F&A funds?
The allocation of TAF dollars, library funds and F&A funds will continue to follow allocation processes in place until adapted to reflect restructuring of units.

tenure and promotion procedures?
The process for tenure and promotion at the department/school level will remain the same. College tenure and promotion procedures will be reviewed and revised as needed based on restructuring. As stated in MTSU policy, “Faculty members tenured in an academic program unit (e.g., a department or division) may be transferred to another academic program unit. In such cases, the transfer will be made with tenure; moreover, the tenure appointment will be transferred to the new academic program unit. In no instance may the faculty member be compelled to relinquish tenure as a condition for effecting the transfer.”

evaluation of faculty?
The annual process for evaluating faculty within a department or school will remain the same.

space allocations?
Space allocation decisions will follow current space allocation guidelines.

summer stipends for summer departmental administration?
Summer stipends for department/school administration will continue under current stipend guidelines until they are reviewed and potentially revised to reflect changes from restructuring.
Identity

**What effects will restructuring have on accreditation?**
Programs are accredited, not departments or schools. Any restructuring will recognize and maintain program integrity.

**What effect will restructuring have on the re-designation of departments and fundraising and grant-gathering ability of affected (or “demoted”) departments and the larger structures of the university?**
Restructuring will clarify purpose and focus for colleges, departments and schools and enhance the potential for synergy among academic units within each college. Both fundraising and grant-generation capacity are expected to increase with restructuring. Development and grant support structures will remain in place.

**What effect will the re-designation of departments have on the recruitment of students and faculty?**
Departments/schools will continue to recruit students and faculty to ensure program quality and integrity.

**Section II**
This section reflects my answers to questions raised at a Faculty Senate meeting on November 9, 2009, and to questions that I have heard during discussions with different individuals and/or groups on campus.

**What makes MTSU a comprehensive university?**
MTSU is a comprehensive university because it offers a wide variety of academic programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Additionally a comprehensive university
- Provides broad public access to education
- Demonstrates commitment to teaching as top priority
- Offers master’s degrees and selective Ph.D. programs of high quality
- Meets regional educational needs
(This is a representative list and is not intended to be all inclusive.)

**What is the vision for restructuring MTSU colleges?**
MTSU will continue to be the educational and economic engine of the region it serves. It will lead through knowledge generation, learning and innovation as it pursues the goals of quality, student-centered learning and success, and partnerships.

**What does “Positioning the University for the Future” mean in respect to restructuring the colleges?**
The restructuring of the colleges is designed to help MTSU position itself for the future by sharpening the focus of the colleges in alignment with the Academic Master Plan. The latest discussion document for restructuring our colleges (see attachment)
• Aligns university program strengths with area/regional strengths for competitive advantage
• Produces clear focus of identities for each of the colleges, internally and externally
  o Aligns programs with significant natural affinities to create and take advantage of interdisciplinary opportunities
  o Establishes credible identity to external constituencies
  o Provides designated leadership (dean) and infrastructure to leverage the focused identity, including enhanced reputation and resource development
• Identifies clearly aligned program strengths, increased synergies and enhanced identity to external constituencies
  o Humanities and Sciences (aligns the University’s general education core offerings as well as provides enhanced strengths and synergies to support and grow Ph.D. programs)
  o Communication, Visual and Performing Arts (provides program alliances to take advantage of the applied opportunities in the entertainment sector in the region)
  o Health, Behavioral and Applied Sciences (focuses on improving the lives of individuals and families, as well as providing focus to programs linked to the technology-industry-economic development enterprise)
  o Education (focuses on leading teacher preparation innovation)
  o Business (links entrepreneurship, business and finance in the public and private sectors to promote economic development)
  o University College (aligns programs and services to address first year, transfer and nontraditional student learning needs to transition into the University and achieve student success)

College restructuring helps to position the university for the future by strategically taking advantage of sectors of our geographic community where our internal strengths converge with external strengths/opportunities. Examples follow.

**Music and Entertainment Industry**
Nashville is known world-wide as Music City. Music and entertainment talent is drawn to the city and surrounding area from all corners of the globe and it is recognized internationally for its industry-leading music production. Music production, coupled with the tourism it generates, has a huge economic impact on the middle Tennessee region. By the most recent comprehensive economic impact study, the industry has a $6.38 billion impact. (Study commissioned by the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce and its Music Associations Task Force and conducted by Dr. Patrick Raines, professor of economics at Belmont University.)

MTSU’s strong programs in recording industry, electronic media, and the visual and performing arts are already producing graduates that are leaders in both the creative and business aspects of the industry. However, sustaining and leveraging new industry partnerships would increase opportunities for our students in these programs to develop industry portfolios and professional contacts that can serve them well as they pursue jobs or graduate programs.
Health Care Industry
Nashville, and the surrounding middle Tennessee region, is recognized nationally and internationally as a health care industry leader and helps shape the national and international health care landscapes. According to the Nashville Health Care Council, the health care industry generates a $20 billion impact to the Nashville region and is the largest employer in Nashville. The area is home to 300+ health care companies operating on a multi-state, national, or international basis with more than 250 professional service firms with expertise in the health care industry (e.g., accounting, architecture, banking, legal). The industry is projected to continue to be a growth sector.

MTSU’s program strengths, student success goals and partnerships both support and are benefitted through connections to the industry. MTSU’s 47,500 graduates currently living and working in the Nashville and surrounding area already provide the industry significant professional and service leadership and expertise, e.g., nursing, social work, gerontology, health care administration and in related support areas, e.g., accounting, insurance, marketing, interior design. Enhanced connections and partnerships between MTSU’s program strengths and the industry heightens opportunities for our students—from increased internships to employment when they graduate to advanced education support from the employer once the student is employed. The potential for enhanced and increased partnerships between MTSU and the industry is great.

Technology and Applied Sciences
MTSU is located in the center of an emerging regional technology and applied sciences corridor. The corridor covers a 40-county area in middle Tennessee surrounding Nashville with a diagonal connection to the Oak Ridge National Laboratories in Oak Ridge and NASA’s Marshall Flight Center in Huntsville, Alabama. MTSU is on a path to support the development of this corridor and to leverage the opportunities it presents. (Mind 2 Marketplace: http://mind2marketplace.com/)

MTSU is positioning itself to develop and support growing technology and innovation in the region. It has made the commitment to become a leader in STEM education (AMP), developed and gained the approval for three new interdisciplinary Ph.D.s (AMP), developed a strong undergraduate research program (AMP), increased support for faculty research (AMP), and increased extramural funding for its programs (AMP). Concurrently, the region is experiencing a coalescing of industry commitment to innovations in such sectors as alternative energy sources, biotechnology, life sciences, food production/safety and aviation. The intersection of our program strengths with these growing sectors provides our students opportunities to be actively engaged in research and development, technology innovation, and to learn entrepreneurial skills that will not only enhance their success but also contributes to the workforce development of the region.

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I sincerely appreciate all of the time and energy some of you are investing in the process and wish everyone an enjoyable, relaxing winter break. Diane