MTSU Network Services embarked upon an expansive project in 2012 to provide complete wireless network coverage to the main campus. The project began with the College of Education receiving the first wireless upgrade in support of several student success initiatives in that building. Each room was surveyed to determine if the current wireless coverage was adequate in terms of signal strength and call capacity. The data was then modeled in special software, pinpointing the exact locations of where wireless access points were needed throughout the building to meet the new performance standards of MTSU Network Services. Through funding provided by Technology Access Fees and the Information Technology Division, the College of Education Building wireless network was completed, providing enhanced coverage and excellent capacity to handle many more wireless devices, including smartphones, laptops, and tablets.

The next building to receive the wireless upgrade was the James E. Walker Library. This building presents a serious challenge to wireless networking, with the book stacks and reinforced walls creating several layers of signal-attenuating material. The survey and data modeling was done, hardware and software ordered and installed, and the new system came to life. Now there is Wi-Fi accessible across the entire learning space.

University housing received an upgrade in the summer of 2014. Student Affairs worked closely with ITD, providing the funding of approximately $1.2 million, to upgrade the Wi-Fi network in all areas of student housing. Over 500 wireless access points were installed and activated in 24 buildings, giving the students and staff stable and fast Wi-Fi networking in dormitory rooms, university apartments, Greek Row, and staff areas within those same buildings. Other buildings that have been upgraded are Business and Aerospace, McFarland, Kirksey Old Main, Peck Hall, College of Media and Entertainment Building, and several others.

To date, over $3 million has been expended on the wireless project, with a total cost for all buildings estimated at approximately $7 million.

The pace of wireless upgrades continues. Additional buildings will be upgraded with priority based on several factors, including age of current equipment, student population served in that building, curriculum requirements, etc. The entire list of buildings with associated upgrade costs and proposed dates can be found at www.mtsu.edu/projects/wireless-project.php.
Stay Alert with the Critical Notification System

Along with longer days, warmer temperatures, and blossoming trees, summertime is also a prime time for severe weather. With the threat of tornadoes, it’s important for you to stay in the loop at all times and everywhere.

When inclement weather affects the University’s daily operations, the MTSU community will be always be notified via the Critical Notification System. This feature is an integral component of MTSU’s critical notification alert system, Alert4U.

All MTSU staff, faculty, and student email addresses are automatically entered into the MTSU Critical Notification System.

If you wish to add phone numbers for texting and/or voicemail or additional email addresses, please log in with your PipelineMT username and password. You may also access your account through your PipelineMT account by clicking on the Alert4U tab.

If you are new to MTSU, you will receive an email with instructions on how to access your account. You are responsible for keeping your account phone numbers up to date.

The Critical Notification System is used only under circumstances that pose a threat of imminent danger to the campus community and/or when it is vital to contact members of the campus community as quickly as possible to take some kind of action.

This critical information also includes (but may not be limited to) notification of an imminent purge of a student’s courses due to incompletion of the registration confirmation step. The system will also be used to send MTSU Advisories via email only. MTSU Advisories inform people of situations and encourage them to be vigilant.

For additional information, visit www.mtsu.edu/alert4u/faqs.php or contact Alana Johnson at 615-898-2677. The notification system does not charge subscribers to send or receive SMS messages. Standard or other messaging charges apply depending upon your wireless carrier plan and subscription details. Once registered, you can opt out of SMS messages at any time by texting STOP to 67283 or 226787.

IT Tips and Tricks

Modify the Default “Send To” Menu

Almost everyone knows that Windows users can right click a file or shortcut and use the Send To menu to send it to a compressed zip, a shortcut on your desktop, or to other applications. But if you want to change the options that appear in your default Send To menu, type “shell:sendto” into the location bar of a folder. You can then drag and drop new folder locations to the Send To folder.
D2L / BrightSpace ePortfolio Tool

As part of the renewed Desire2Learn/BrightSpace contract, we now have access to the ePortfolio tool. The tool has been activated and is being piloted in seven sections for the remainder of the Spring 2016 semester.

Faculty and students in those courses will help ITD iron out any questions and issues and help direct the development of support materials.

Summer pilots will be granted by request, and the tool will be opened up for everyone for the Fall 2016 semester. Support materials are currently under development, and workshops on using and creating assignments for the ePortfolio will begin starting in late summer.

Questions on the eportfolio, can be addressed to the FITC (8189) or the LT&ITC (7671).

Degree Works Update

Much progress has been made on Degree Works, especially with creating the thousands of rules for the various programs of study. As you know this is one of many student success initiatives currently taking place at MTSU. The next step in the project is testing and validation. More project updates will be forthcoming in late spring.

SSC Campus Update

MTSU’s implementation and beta test of EAB’s newest platform called SSC Campus is making great strides. A test environment has already been built, and a select group of team members are beginning to work out user roles and permissions settings. True single sign-on has been achieved. So once we turn on the system for the whole campus, you will no longer have to use your full email address as your username like you do with the current EAB SSC system. Instead you’ll be able to log in with your PipelineMT username. Plans are to also add photos to the new system. A mid-spring 2016 “go live” is still anticipated.

Skype for Business Update

As we embark on a new year, MTSU’s Skype for Business deployment is gaining significant momentum. In January, the Miller Education Center, formerly Bell Street Center, opened its doors, and as part of that opening, roughly 45 users were migrated to the University’s new phone system, Skype for Business.

Occupants of the Miller Education Center include staff from University College, The Center for Counseling and Psychological Services, University Police, Production Services, and the Confucius Institute.

Over the next 18 months, ITD will be migrating all current Avaya users to the new phone system, Skype for Business. This deployment will be a building-by-building migration.

As buildings are identified, ITD Telecommunication Services will be hosting departmental meetings with administration to develop a specific migration plan. Currently, work is beginning to migrate telephone users in the Alumni Office, Alumni Relations House, Fairview Building, Sam Ingram Building, and Tennessee Miller Coliseum.

In addition, discussions are ongoing with departments housed in the Black House, Greenhouse, Horticulture Facility, Lytle House, and Emmett and Rose Kennon Sports Hall of Fame. Expected completion is late February.

More details on ITD’s Deployment Plan for Skype for Business may be found on ITD’s Skype for Business website at www.mtsu.edu/itdtele/Skype.php.

Telephone Tidbits

Want to learn more about Skype for Business? It’s never too early to attend training! Skype for Business training dates have been scheduled and are posted on the ITD workshop website. Registration is first come, first served, but with a semester full of training opportunities, we hope there is a day that will work for you! For more information, please visit www.mtsu.edu/itd/workshops.php. We hope to see you in a session soon!
Like technology, the workplace has evolved. The employer demands of today aren’t like the employer demands of yesterday. In order to prepare students to meet those demands, the Jennings A. Jones College of Business recently revised its M.B.A. program.

“The goal was to come up with a program that is responsive to what employers want from our graduates and at the same time incorporate some of the best practices in graduate-management education across the country,” said Dr. Kim Sokoya, associate dean for graduate and executive education in the Jones College of Business.

Revising the M.B.A. program was an extensive process. The first step included the surveying of major employers to learn which skills they were requiring from college graduates.

“We then surveyed our M.B.A. graduates to find out what we could do to improve the program,” Sokoya added. “After collecting the data from those two groups, we put together a task force with faculty members from all the different disciplines.”

The task force then used the collected data, information from other colleges around the country, and input from other faculty colleagues to draft a new M.B.A. curriculum. This resulted in the redesigning of all the courses in the program with another group of faculty members working together to ensure that the courses were well-integrated.

Once they got the framework established for the new program, faculty members assembled on a weekly basis to discuss course content and course sequencing for the program.

“These faculty members met weekly for a whole semester to get this done,” Sokoya said. “As you can imagine, it was challenging coordinating the schedule, but the faculty members were committed to designing a good program.”

The revised courses were then approved by departmental curriculum committees, the college graduate curriculum committee, and finally, by the University Graduate Council.

“We wanted to make sure that our graduates were adequately prepared for the challenges of the changing workplace,” Sokoya said. “We have not had the opportunity to do a major revision of the program in over a decade, and we thought it was time to embark on the project. In addition, we heard loud and clear from employers that we need to incorporate soft-skill development in our course offerings. Finally, we wanted to make sure that we of-
M.B.A. Program (continued from page 4)

fer and deliver a program that will meet the needs of the working adult population. The newly revised program with different delivery methods was designed to accommodate full-time students and part-time students, with classes on ground and online.”

The department started working on this project in the fall of 2013 and rolled out the new Flex M.B.A. program in the fall of 2015.

“It is our intention to engage in continuous assessment of the program to make sure that we are meeting the needs of our students and employers in the area,” Sokoya said. “If you will, this is an ongoing project to make sure that the M.B.A. program is always relevant and at the cutting edge of graduate management education.”

Dr. Bichaka Fayissa, professor of economics, also played an instrumental role in the ambitious M.B.A. program redesign.

“We hope to offer people who are working full time the option to be able to work on a degree program which enables them to move up their career ladder without having to quit work to go to school,” he said.

Since these new courses are not offered in a conventional brick-and-mortar classroom, technology plays a significant role in their design.

“The delivery of the courses heavily depends on reliable technology and most importantly the significant assistance of the instructional support personnel,” Fayissa said. “I use MindTap tutorial software for my MBAE 6865, Myeconlab for Principles of Microeconomics, Excel for Economics 6000, and Health Economics 6400. For an online course to work smoothly and be a rewarding learning experience for students, a great deal of effort has been exerted to put the tools and resources (Lecture slides, lecture videos, discussion forum, homework assignments, quizzes, and exams) students need to succeed in the courses (learning goals and expected outcomes for the assurance of learning) in place prior to the beginning of the course.”

“Technology has played a significant role,” Sokoya added. “We have acquired some additional software and hardware to help us as we move toward delivering the whole program online. It is now possible for students to take all the required MBA courses online. Technology is also being used in our program to enhance student engagement.”

Ultimately, Sokoya hopes that the new Flex MBA program and other graduate programs in the Jones College of Business will adequately prepare students for the challenges that lay ahead.

“We want Jones College to be the destination graduate school in the middle Tennessee area for both students and potential employers,” he said.

“Wayfinding” refers to information systems that guide people through a physical environment and enhance their understanding and experience of the space and is an essential function of digital signage. Not only can a digital sign display a static floor plan diagram, it can show paths from a starting point to a desired location. That location can be the Welcome Desk where campus tours start, the dean’s office in the College of Business, or the location of your 10 a.m. biology class. MTSU currently has digital directories in seven buildings. Find one and explore!
Providing a Helping Hand

As an instructional technology specialist, ITD’s Jimmy Williams is the intermediary between technology and faculty.

“I would say that I mainly take care of D2L administration,” he said. “I help faculty and staff with their D2L questions or concerns. I also teach workshops about all of the different aspects of D2L and various accessibility topics.”

Williams is tasked with Desire2Learn administration including fielding calls from faculty/staff and students about issues with D2L. Before joining ITD in July 2014, he worked as an adaptive technology specialist at the University of Mississippi, where he was responsible for all format changes for books and classroom materials for students with disabilities.

“My first IT job was working in a tech shop, while I was in school,” he said. “I then ended up taking a job working for St. Jude at the helpdesk. When my wife decided to pursue her Ph.D, I left St. Jude and took a job working for the University of Mississippi, taking care of all the IT for one of its satellite campuses. After working three years at the satellite campus, I took a job as an adaptive technology specialist with Student Disability Services on the main campus. I was in charge of all IT for the department and changing the format of any media into something that the students could better access—everything from converting text books to accessible PDF/Word doc or hardcover books to braille. That experience has come in very handy in my career.”

His other responsibilities at Ole Miss included facilitating all IT in the office such as maintaining the server, website, work stations, lab, and various adaptive technologies.

“We moved to Murfreesboro, and I wanted to continue my career in higher education” said Williams, who holds an associate’s degree in Unix/Linux System Administration and a bachelor’s degree in Information Technology Management from Christian Brothers University. “MTSU was the perfect fit for me, and I have not been disappointed.”

Williams also holds certifications in A+ and N+.

“It seems like every job that I have had has been perfect for me to gain the skills that have made me successful,” he said. “I wish I could take all of the credit for me being where I am, but fortunately for me I have been very lucky that the right jobs were available when I was looking for a new job. It’s a rare thing to find a good IT position that you are qualified for at your first choice of employment. Working here at MTSU has been wonderful, and I am very thankful to have found such a wonderful work community.”

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Jonathan L. Grate recently joined ITD as a desktop and classroom technical support specialist in the Client Services area. He works closely with AMX systems across the entire campus. Previously, he worked in the Division of Student Affairs, Enrollment and Academic Services as a unions and programming technical specialist, where he oversaw the AMX systems and event spaces for the JUB, KUC, and SUB. Additionally, he served as the supervisor for the computer lab in the Student Union and worked special events on campus. Grate holds a bachelor’s degree in Business Management from MTSU with a focus in Information Systems. He has taken numerous classes and undergone several trainings to further his knowledge in the realm of audiovisual technology. He is a certified AMX programmer and holds additional certifications in Extron. Grate plans on increasing the reliability and usability of the AMX systems for faculty and staff. This will be achieved through training and new implementation practices to facilitate a user-friendly experience that will seamlessly integrate classroom technology with classroom curriculums. He lives in the Gulch area of downtown Nashville.

Joshua Love is ITD’s newest desktop and classroom technical support specialist. His responsibilities include servicing inventoried computers—both hardware and software—for the College of Basic and Applied Sciences. He also provides support for computer peripherals and gives quotes on new equipment. Before coming to MTSU, Love worked as a desktop support specialist and IT end user analyst for the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), where he provided in-person and remote assistance on a variety of hardware and software issues. He holds master’s degree in Information Technology with a specialization in Network Architecture. Love plans to use his education and experience as a desktop support specialist to ensure that everyone he comes into contact with gets their IT-related issues resolved to the best of his abilities.

Installing and Surplusing Computers

Computer inventory details are critical pieces of information when it comes to replacing old computers. The inventory is up to date, and ITD has to depend on each of you to keep it current. As we have gone through this last inventory update, we found that many computers that were supposed to have been surplus are in closets or sitting on someone’s desk. It is important that ITD be involved in all computer installs, moves, and surplus activities in an effort to keep the inventory current.

We are beginning the Academic Affairs seven years or older primary computer replacements. As we are doing installs, we will be taking the primary machine that is being replaced plus rounding up machines that have been previously reported as surplus.

Moving forward, ITD will periodically conduct departmental computer audits. This has become necessary because of the many discrepancies that were found. Also, please note that as we move forward with desktop replacements, only full-time employee machines will be replaced. If there is a need to replace machines, i.e., student workers, GAs, Adjuncts, etc., the department will be responsible for the funding.

We hope to be back on track with a regular five-year primary desktop computer replacement program within a couple years. If you have any questions, please contact Robin Jones at robin.jones@mtsu.edu or (615) 898-2214.

Jimmy Williams (continued from page 6)

Williams embraces the challenges associated with helping faculty overcome their frustrations with their technological issues.

“Sometimes it is hard to decipher what someone’s real issues are,” he said, “either out of frustration or not completely understanding the problem themselves. One way or another, we always get the issue taken care of. It’s also challenging to keep up with all of the changes that are going on in D2L or other software packages that we support. That being said, I really enjoy being able to help faculty with their questions. It’s like trying to solve a puzzle. The people here at MTSU are really enjoyable to work with. Everyone here is very good at their job and takes it very seriously, but are also still able to keep a very mellow and fun environment.”

When he’s not at work helping faculty and staff with their D2L issues, Williams enjoys working on projects around the house or on one of his vehicles. He also coaches his son’s youth baseball team.

“Anything that you can stand back afterward and be proud of your work,” he said. “I love to go fishing or ride the four-wheeler. Basically I like anything to do with being on the baseball field, the water, or in the woods.”

Williams plans to continue to grow his IT skills and plans to get back into the classroom to earn his master’s degree in Computer Science.