

## *The Reach to Distinction: [Academic Master Plan 2015-2025](#)*

### Implementation Overview for

July 1, 2021, through June 30, 2022

#### Strategic Direction 1: Promote Engagement

**Objective: Implement aggressively the Quest for Student Success**

*Action Steps:*

*Implement and monitor implementation of Quest for Student Success 2025*

- [Quest 2025 Forum](#) in April 2022 shared updates from the five Strategic Priority committees.
- Items marked with an asterisk \* throughout this report are aligned with Quest 2025.

*Revisit admissions criteria*

- Despite ever-changing COVID restrictions last fall, Admissions recruiters delivered the largest number of first-year applications (>12,000) and admitted students (>8,000) in the history of the University.

*Improve infrastructure for increased employment opportunities for students*

The Career Development Center experienced record student engagement with its services:

- 47,346 jobs were posted which was a 177% increase over the previous year
- 9,242 applications were submitted through the system
- 2,835 new employer approvals for job postings for students and alumni
- 2,362 scheduled appointments with career advisors
- 1,135 documents reviewed via document drop
- 4,693 students engaged through presentations

**Objective: Achieve the goals of MT Engage**

*Action Steps:*

*Develop and implement QEP*

- QEP Impact Report was accepted by SACSCOC as part of the University's Fifth-Year Interim Report to the Commission.
- First endowed scholarships awarded.

*Expand EXL*

- Total number of EXL course sections rose from 783 to 935 and the number of students enrolled in those courses increased from 12,922 to 13,160.

*Develop co-curricular programs*

- Student Affairs centralized its Campus Life events [calendar](#).

- All MT Engage courses included a beyond-the-classroom assignment; faculty teaching 366 course sections in Fall 2021 and 309 course sections in Spring 2022 had their students involved in co-curricular events and activities.

*Create opportunities for students to participate in all public programs on campus*

- The American Democracy Project (ADP) sponsored [Constitution readings](#) at various sites across campus and public programs that engaged both the MTSU and local communities.

*Develop and implement programs and services, to engage off-campus and online students in learning, scholarship, and service.*

- The University Honors College sponsored public events (livestreamed on Facebook) on important current issues, such as the [Ukraine Crisis](#), to engage and inform on- and off-campus students.

**Objective: Sharpen focus on the internationalization of programs and partnerships**

*Action Step:*

*Implement International Affairs Strategic Plan*

- Office of International Affairs launched [Index of Global Expertise](#).
- MTSU accepted for ACE Internationalization Lab self-assessment and plan development.
- President McPhee and Vice Provost for International Affairs Robert Summers held recruitment event at Bahamas Bowl.

**Objective: Create more interactive learning/living spaces across campus**

*Action Steps:*

*Implement Facilities Master Plan\**

- School of Concrete and Construction Management Building nears completion; building is an interactive learning laboratory.
- MTSU secured THEC, State Building Commission, and State Budget approval for Kirksey Old Main and Rutledge Hall renovations and a new Aerospace Facility at Shelbyville, all to be designed for interactive learning.
- Renovation of Cason-Kennedy Nursing Building created spaces for Physician Assistant Studies M.S. program with configurations and instructional technologies that support collaborative teaching and learning pedagogies.
- College of Media and Entertainment opened state-of-the-art [Main Street Studios](#).
- Student hangout space created as part of Office of International Affairs relocation to Jones Hall.

*Provide all faculty members with a consistent level of quality in support services, e.g., office spaces conducive to student interaction and their own work.*

- Technology Access Fund support improved classroom technologies and configurations in Honors, Learning Resource Center, Kirksey Old Main, Stark Agricultural Building, Todd Hall.
- Center for Historic Preservation relocated to renovated offices and collaborative workspaces in Peck Hall.

**Objective:** Facilitate collaborations among and between faculty, alumni, community, friends, and the business and non-profit sectors

*Action Steps:*

*Create academically centered department and college initiatives/activities/events collaboratively with alumni, community, friends, and business and non-profit entities*

- Positive Aging Consortium held inaugural [conference](#) with industry and community partners.

## Strategic Direction 2: Foster Academic Community

**Objective:** Deepen commitment to access and diversity

*Action Steps:*

*Create and implement an updated strategic access and diversity, equity, and inclusion plan for students, faculty, and staff.\**

- Dr. Monica Smith hired as Assistant to the President for Community Engagement and Inclusion.
- Black Faculty and Staff Association reactivated.
- College of Education established the [Fairness, Justice, and Equity Center](#).
- DEI faculty- and/or staff-led programs included Using Micro-Affirmations to Create an Inclusive Teaching Environment, Creating Culturally and Linguistically Inclusive Learning Environments, It Might Get Better: Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students in the Classroom and Beyond by faculty at LT&ITC; Diversity programs by Intercultural and Diversity Affairs Center
- LT&ITC sponsored a year-long Faculty Learning Community, “[And Then There Was COVID: Exploring Inequity and Barriers to Higher Education Identified Through a Virtual Classroom Environment](#),” led by Claire Cook & Ida Fadzilla.
- Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance shared informational [videos](#) with strategies to improve campus access for people with disabilities to the University community during National Disability Employment Awareness Month, October 2021.
- Other inclusive campus activities included:
  - Center for Health and Human Services activities: Mental Health Check Up and Mental Health First Aid programs
  - MTSU Counseling introduced Let’s Talk drop-in service
  - MTSU Center for Counseling and Psychological Services and MTSU Online introduced Therapy Assistance Online
  - Festival of Veils event March 19 explored head coverings in Judaism, Catholicism, and Islam

**Objective:** Develop innovative, interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs

*Action Steps:*

*Increase distinctive programs that compete nationally/internationally, e.g., Concrete Industry Management, Recording Industry, Aerospace, etc.*

- New programs approved: B.S. Public Writing and Rhetoric; M.S. Data Science; M.S. Supply Chain Management
- [M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies](#) first cohort of students began May 2022
- [Online academic programs](#) and courses increased: 16 programs, 99 courses\*

Objective: Promote increased and sustained research, scholarship, and creative activity

*Action Steps:*

*Invest in increased salaries for faculty and staff*

- Employees received 2.7 percent salary increase or an increase of \$750, whichever greater, prorated for part-time employees, effective July 1, 2021.

*Create a Faculty Resources web site*

- Faculty resource pages made available on [departmental](#) and [college](#) websites; One Stop [website](#); Student Affairs [website](#)

*Expand undergraduate and graduate student research programs*

- The Undergraduate Research Center launched its new SOAR Ambassador program focused on engaging experienced student ambassadors in key areas of undergraduate research to promote involvement, recruit potential future student researchers, increase student feedback and participation in the organization of Scholars Week, conduct research on our programs, and increase recognition of the URC's successes. During its inaugural year, the URC offered the following positions: Peer Mentor Scholar; Communications and Social Media Ambassador; Scholars Week Ambassador; READY to SOAR Ambassador; and Research Assistant Ambassador.

*Establish a Research/Outreach Forum/Lecture Series to showcase faculty and/or student scholarship activities*

and

*Develop interdisciplinary initiatives that build academic community on campus and between the campus and larger communities and provide dissemination of scholarship and artistic works to on-campus and broader community constituencies*

- In-person scholarly events, arts exhibitions and performances began welcoming on- and off-campus community members to live events, often with virtual and livestream options to reach more students and community members, such as the virtual annual [Literacy Research Conference](#), US Rep. Steve Cohen's livestreamed speech on the Equal Rights Amendment and the constitutional amendment process, Tennessee STEM Education Center's virtual STEAM Festival programming, and a webinar discussion of teaching about slavery with author [Clint Smith](#).

*Increase support for graduate students to participate in professional activities*

- In 2021-2022, the College of Graduate Studies awarded 56 students a total of \$28,395.38 (significantly more than last year due to COVID) to participate in on-ground (and virtual) conferences. The CGS continues to facilitate students applying for state, regional, and national thesis/dissertation awards.

*Implement an Innovative Modalities for non-traditional Populations Plan*

- TBR grant “Embracing Equity through Open Educational Resources” funded subawards to faculty to adopt, adapt, create, or revise OER.

**Objective: Cultivate meaningful, reciprocal partnerships and public service programs**

*Action Steps:*

*Create a MT Partnership/Outreach Initiative (local and global) that emphasizes reciprocity as well as MTSU's economic contributions and impact across business and industry, the non-profit sector, True Blue, etc.*

- Center for Health and Human Services, Department of Health and Human Performance, Data Science Institute, and Wilson County awarded three-year implementation grant for Rural Communities Opioid Response Program by the Health Resources and Services Administration

*Extend MTSU Arts (music, theatre, art, dance, photography) to showcase student/faculty creative works to both campus community and broader communities*

- MTSU Write, faculty, community artists participated in “[Green Is the New Blue](#)” public workshops funded by the Tennessee Arts Commission
- The [In Process Writing Series](#) featured both MTSU faculty and local artists (fiction writers, poets, playwrights, song writers, etc.

**Objective: Invest in the professional development of faculty, students, and staff**

*Action Steps:*

*Increase the number of Faculty Learning Communities*

- The Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center offered nine Faculty Learning Communities in 2021-2022, its largest number of FLCs to date
- MTSU Center for Organizational and Human Resource Effectiveness undertook a study to assess and recommend enhancement of the Learning, Teaching, and Innovative Technologies Center\*

*Implement "Service" training and development for all MTSU employees (include teamwork)*

- Human Resources initiated trainings for supervisors of student workers\*

**Objective: Recognize and celebrate achievement of excellence**

- MTSU research efforts elevate the University to [Carnegie R2 “high research activity”](#) status

*Action Steps:*

*Create a more effective marketing and communication plan to celebrate faculty /student/ staff accomplishments with multiple constituencies*

- Marketing and Communications highlighted [service to students](#) to recognize and celebrate our faculty and staff

*Implement formal student recognition programs with student successes/accomplishments shared with broader communities*

- Graduation distinctions for undergraduate researchers created to recognize excellence in this high-impact practice, with two levels of distinction. In its first year, MTSU recognized 30 students who achieved exemplary standards in undergraduate research.
- URC created newsletter to recognize excellence in undergraduate research. News from the URC is a monthly publication that highlights student successes, programs, workshops and events, and regional and national opportunities for engagement.

### Strategic Direction 3: Innovate for Effectiveness and Efficiency

**Objective: Encourage and support innovative programs and services**

*Action Steps:*

*Further internationalize the curriculum/bring global perspective to curriculum*

- [International Education Week](#) campus events held November 15-19
- Faculty-led workshop “Internationalizing Our Campus: It is Closer Than You Think” held at LT&ITC
- TBR awarded grant to support study abroad by underrepresented students

*Expand course redesign initiative to all General Education courses*

- The General Education Committee and Design Leadership Team continued to visit individual colleges, departments, and programs to answer questions, invite suggestions, and lay the groundwork for the rollout of the program in 2024
- In spring 2022, the committee approved a new program for General Education—the [True Blue Core](#) that retains the best of our current curriculum while it creates new opportunities for student exploration and faculty innovation. The True Blue Core features Blueprints, which offer guided pathways through the core curriculum. Implementation begins in fall 2022, with an official launch scheduled for fall 2024.

*Promote interdisciplinary initiatives that build ties across the academic community to create and disseminate knowledge and artistic works*

- Department of Art and Design, Todd Galleries collaborations with MainStreet Murfreesboro
- The Political Economy Research Institute (PERI) and University Honors College partnered with Remnant Trust of Texas A&M University to make rare books and manuscripts from its collection available for viewing and use by MTSU faculty, staff, students, and community as part of the Spring 2022 Honors Lecture Series on Exegesis, featuring expert faculty presentations on the works and authors.

*Expand Honors opportunities identified in University Honors College Master Plan*

- Because of its past success, the University Honors College applied for and received a second grant (\$35K for use over three years) from the Jones Foundation to expand opportunities for all honors transfer students, such as financial support for research/creative activity, participation in national conventions/conference, honor society

memberships (like Phi Kappa Phi and Omicron Delta Kappa), study away programs, and study abroad programs.

- The University Honors College increased its honors advising staff in 2021-2022 from 2 to 2.5 positions to provide its students an enhanced level of support (both curricular and honors program-specific) beyond the advising offered in their individual colleges.
- The University Honors College had a record year in securing national and international fellowships and scholarships—including Fulbright, Goldwater, Gillman, Critical Language, Phi Kappa Phi, JET, NSF-GRFP, and REUs—for its current and graduating students.

**Objective: Partner with business, industry, and nonprofit organizations to respond to their unique educational needs and the economic development of the region**

*Action Step:*

*Develop a focused and distinctive Partnership initiative to hallmark MTSU's distinctive strengths and in innovation and economic development within and outside the region*

- [McGuire True Blue Educational Partnership](#) and [Noblitt True Blue Educational Partnership](#) launched
- [IT Connect](#) 2021 Career Fair, organized by the Department of Information Systems and Analytics, celebrated its tenth year connecting employers and students
- The Business and Economic Research Center is tracking economic indicators and housing trend in partnership with [TACIR](#) and [THDA](#).
- The BEREC is researching and disseminating [manufacturing sector human resource practices](#) through regional alliances involving local chambers, regional associations, and state and federal government entities.
- The Political Economy of Research Institute (PERI) is a cohost of the Bastiat Society of Nashville, which provides a platform for scholars and policy experts to share their insights and experiences with the general business community. PERI's events address sound economic principles, personal freedom, and opportunities created through markets.
- PERI developed a [public policy paper series](#) focused on applying academic research to state and local policy issues to help foster economic growth.
- PERI contributed to public policy discussions pertinent to economic development in op-eds published in *The Tennessean*, the *Tennessee Lookout*, the *Center Square*, and the *Nashville Business Journal*.

**Objective: Promote communication, transparency, and accountability**

*Action Steps:*

*Develop and implement a communication plan to better inform the community about the economic impact MTSU has on Murfreesboro / Rutherford County and the region*

- Business and Economic Research Center published [2022 MTSU Economic Impact](#) study showing the University's total 2021 impact on Tennessee's economy: 11,494 jobs across Tennessee; over \$616.8 million in wages and salaries; \$1.428 billion in total economic activity (business revenue); more than \$143 million in local, state, and federal taxes.

*Create and implement "better customer service" initiative across the University\**

- Chat bot launched in key areas of MTSU website\*
- Human Resources Services launched workshops for supervisors of student workers\*

**Objective: Create more flexible administrative processes**

*Action Steps:*

*Move all processing paperwork to electronic format*

- Units across campus continued to replace paper forms with dynamic forms

**Objective: Enhance informational, physical, and technological infrastructure**

*Action Steps:*

*1) Implement James E. Walker Library Strategic Plan. 2) **Implement Facilities Master Plan.** 3) Implement Business and Finance division strategic plan. 4) Implement Information Technology Division strategic plan. 5) Implement Marketing and Communications division strategic plan. Implement University Advancement division strategic plan.*

- THEC, State Building Commission, and State Budget approval secured for renovations of Kirksey Old Main and Rutledge Hall as well as new Aerospace facility\*

**Objective: Promote efficiencies in operations and processes**

*Action Steps:*

*Review divisional/unit IEARs for implementation of improvement plans*

- Created Divisional Assessment Coordinator Committee to share best practices and results.
- Created University Assessment Committee comprised of academic and divisional coordinators.

**Objective: Create a welcoming, inclusive campus that is healthy and safe for all University publics**

*Action Steps:*

*Implement processes using multiple portals to advertise events to various constituencies*

- Marketing and Communications implemented processes using multiple portals (MTSU home page, Campus events calendar, email campaigns, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, MTSUNews, media releases sent to various media partners, which resulted in feature stories and interviews such as:
  - concert productions with the Grand Ole Opry and Bonnaroo,
  - student delegation to the Grammys,
  - the return of in-person camps and outreach for prospective students, such as
    - Governor's School for the Arts
    - Civil Air Patrol National Cadet Engineering Technology Academy
    - Tennessee Girls in Science and the creation of a new week-long STEM Camp in the College of Basic and Applied Sciences
    - [Blackman Collegiate Academy](#)'s Day at MTSU