

# Middle Tennessee State University Strategic Plan

## Strategic Planning Committee Meeting

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August 14, 2024  
9:00 AM  
MTSU Student Union

### Meeting Minutes

#### Welcome

Strategic Plan Chair Jeff Gibson welcomed attendees and thanked them for attending during the busy start of the fall semester.

#### Overview and Update on the Strategic Planning Process

##### *Strategic Plan Development Progress and Timeline*

Chair Gibson reviewed the strategic plan timeline and summarized the strategic planning activities completed so far:

- Fall 2023 - Reviewing the institutional mission statement
- Spring 2024 - Gathering information, surveying stakeholders, and conducting listening sessions
- Summer 2024 - Developing the first draft of the framework.

In the 2024-2025 academic year, there will be additional opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback via a survey and listening sessions to help refine the strategic plan framework and plan for implementation. The plan will be presented to President McPhee and the MTSU Board of Trustees in Spring 2025, with implementation to follow in Summer 2025.

##### *Institutional & Environmental Context and Themes from Goals and Strategy Discussions*

Chair Gibson shared an Institutional and Environmental Context document, which outlines the strategic planning activities completed to date and summarizes the insights that emerged from the process so far. The document includes the institutional strengths and opportunities that should be sustained and leveraged, as well as the continuing and developing issues the institution should address and plan for in the future.

Chair Gibson also shared the themes from the goals and strategy discussions with institutional stakeholders. The emerging academic quality themes related to academic program offerings, faculty development/pedagogical support, facility updates, and research. Student belonging, engagement, housing, wellness, and support services were the themes related to student success. Engagement themes revolved around engagement with the community, alumni, and donors. Additional themes emerged surrounding institutional branding and student recruitment, as well as administrative issues, such as policies and procedures, budgeting, and communication.

### *Introduction of the Draft Strategic Planning Framework*

Chair Gibson explained that the draft framework evolved from the insights gathered in the previous academic year. He thanked the leadership committee for their earnest and thoughtful discussion during the draft framework development process. Committee members noted the plan was clear and easy to understand.

### **Preview of Work to be Completed**

Chair Gibson explained that implementation of the new strategic plan will be overseen by the Planning Committee. There will be a chair and co-chair for each priority, and implementation will follow a one-year cycle aligned with the academic and fiscal years. A campus launch event will be held in September to showcase initiatives for the new year. Mid-year progress reports will be delivered in December or January, followed by end-of-year closing reports to be shared in April. Plans for the next year will also be shared in April to align with the institutional budgeting calendar.

Chair Gibson also shared potential metrics or indicators that could be used to evaluate plan progress and achievement, as well as the positions on campus that would be responsible for developing and implementing initiatives each year.

### **Draft Strategic Planning Framework Discussion**

Chair Gibson opened the floor for comments and questions about the draft framework, implementation cycle, or metrics. One member noted that community members have shared frustrations about their experiences when trying to engage with the campus community and questioned why few items in the framework were targeted to the community. Chair Gibson offered that community engagement is primarily included in the priority to 'Cultivate Sustainable Partnerships' and the 'Strengthen Community and Industry Collaborations' strategy. He explained that the framework is intentionally vague to enable divisions and departments to develop initiatives that align with the overarching goals without being too prescriptive.

Several other members shared their concerns about prioritizing community engagement and noted even the best-laid plans would be unsuccessful without adequate resources. Recommendations included presenting a budget for the strategic plan to President McPhee and the MTSU Board of Trustees and including more MTSU ambassadors, such as Lightning, in community events. Chair Gibson explained that the implementation process is designed to allow responsible positions to request funding for specific initiatives each year.

An attendee noted communication with the community continues to be challenging. The institution must develop other communication channels outside social media because people are getting fatigued from social media. Sometimes, community members only learn about events after they occur. Co-Chair Whitefield shared that this issue was also raised in the Engagement pillar discussions. Stakeholders want to improve communication internally and externally.

One member noted that many initiatives will require extensive additional resources and questioned whether there are opportunities to identify programs and initiatives that are not successful and reallocate those resources to new priority areas. Another member asked if an annual cycle would be

adequate in order to implement, measure, and evaluate effectiveness. Chair Gibson explained that the goal of the development committee was to develop the framework, while the implementation committee would be responsible for developing initiatives and evaluation plans. He also acknowledged that some initiatives would require longer cycles.

A member questioned whether some existing metrics should be re-evaluated or changed, particularly those related to research and housing. Much of the institution's current year-to-year focus is on improving the previous year's numbers. However, some activities may not be captured adequately in existing measurements. Another member noted the most important metric for many people is whether students are better off when they leave the university, such as whether they are employed in jobs that they were unqualified for before enrolling in an MTSU program. The committee should determine which metrics adequately and accurately measure student success and be ready to address these points when talking to the public.

Attendees discussed several aspects of the strategy to 'support wellness, belonging, and engagement'. One member questioned whether the framework sufficiently highlights faculty and staff wellness in addition to students. Another member questioned using the word 'support' and recommended using the word 'facilitate' instead. Co-Chair Whitefield offered that the leadership committee received feedback that some strategies or initiatives exist in some form; therefore, using words like 'support' or 'strengthen' indicates the desire to expand or improve those activities.

#### **Adjournment to Pillar Break-Out Sessions**

Chair Gibson thanked members again for attending the first full meeting and reiterated his excitement about the process and the committee's goal of creating a plan that positions the university for the future. He adjourned attendees to the pillar break-out sessions at 9:42 AM.