



# **Middle Tennessee State University**

## **Board of Trustees**

### **Spring Quarterly Board Meeting**

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**Tuesday, April 5, 2022**  
**1:00 p.m.**

**MEC Meeting Room – 2nd Floor**  
**Miller Education Center**  
**503 East Bell Street**  
**Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130**





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Quarterly Board Meeting**

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Tuesday, April 5, 2022  
1:00 p.m.

**AGENDA**

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Introduction of Student-Veteran

Recognition of 2021-22 Blue Raiders Basketball Teams

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Roll Call

Requests to Address the Board

Minutes ..... Tab 1  
December 8, 2021 Board Meeting

Academic Affairs, Student Life and Athletics Committee Report  
and Recommendations ..... Tab 2

1. Approval of New Academic Degree Programs
  - a. Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric
  - b. Master of Science in Supply Chain Management (elevation from a concentration to degree)
2. Approval of Honorary Degrees

Audit and Compliance Committee Meeting Report

Executive and Governance Committee Report and Recommendations ..... Tab 3

1. Institutional Mission and Mission Profile
2. President's Contract

Finance and Personnel Committee Report and Recommendations .....Tab 4

1. Permanent Appointment of Assistant to the President for Community Engagement and Inclusion
2. Approval of Policy Revision
  - a. Policy 611 – Financial Performance Review
3. Capital Disclosures

President’s Report

Closing Remarks

Adjournment



**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **Minutes of December 8, 2021  
Winter Quarterly Board Meeting**

PRESENTER: Chairman Steve Smith

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Approval of minutes of December 8, 2021 Winter Quarterly Board Meeting



**MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**MINUTES**

The Middle Tennessee State University Board of Trustees met on December 8, 2021, in the Miller Education Center Meeting Room at Middle Tennessee State University.

**Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Board Chair Steve Smith called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Keith Huber led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Introduction of Student Veteran**

Gen. Huber introduced Army Sergeant Mark McGavock Lowe. After attending Vanderbilt for two years, he joined the U.S. Army. From 2015-2020 he served in an elite infantry division, 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, as a fire support Sergeant with deployment and combat in Afghanistan. He has now transferred his college credits to MTSU, where he is majoring in data science and currently has a 4.0 GPA. Mr. Lowe spoke of the support he has received from the Daniels Center and the University's veteran community. He also shared that his main motivation for pursuing military service occurred when Gen. Huber spoke at his high school. Lastly, he expressed that veteran support and the new data science degree were the two main factors for him choosing MTSU.

**Recognition of Coach Jimmy Borendame**

Chairman Smith recognized Coach Jimmy Borendame who has spent 11 years as MTSU's Men's Tennis Coach. Borendame, a Wheaton, Illinois native, has led his team to Sun Belt Conference championships in 2011 and 2012 and most recently followed up with a pair of Conference USA titles in 2019 and 2021. Before arriving in Murfreesboro, Borendame coached men's tennis at Drake University, Virginia Tech, West Virginia, and William and Mary. He is a graduate of Butler University where he played tennis. Chairman Smith acknowledged Coach Borendame for his

recent recognition as C-USA Men's Tennis Coach of the Year, the third consecutive year he has received this honor.

Coach Borendame expressed his appreciation for the Board's leadership and support of the athletics program and students.

### **Roll Call**

Board Secretary James Floyd called the roll. The following trustees were in attendance: J.B. Baker, Tom Boyd, Rick Cottle, Pete DeLay, Darrell Freeman, Joey Jacobs, Gabriela Jaimes, Chris Karbowski, Stephen Smith, and Pam Wright. A quorum was declared.

President Sidney A. McPhee; Mark Byrnes, University Provost; Joe Bales, Vice President for University Advancement; Bruce Petryshak, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer; Deb Sells, Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost for Enrollment and Academic Services; Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance; Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications; Brenda Burkhart, Chief Audit Executive; James Floyd, University Counsel and Board Secretary; and Kim Edgar, Executive Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff, were also in attendance.

### **Requests to Address the Board**

Chairman Smith noted that timely requests were made by Dr. Jewel Winn and Rev. Harold Yokley to address the Board. Both individuals were granted the opportunity to address the Board for 5 minutes with Board Secretary Floyd responsible for keeping track of time.

Dr. Winn congratulated MTSU, her alma mater, for its success and accomplishments over the years. She then shared concerns about the decline in black student enrollment and facility names. Dr. Winn next outlined her fears about four-year graduation rates for both African American males and females and the need for an ethnically and culturally diverse faculty.



Rev. Yokley, an MTSU alumnus and pastor of Murfreesboro's New Life Christian Church, spoke of serving on a commission and a board around 40 years ago with President Ingram and Dr. Floyd to address diversity and inclusion. He stated that he is concerned MTSU is at the same place now as it was 40 years ago with questions on how to improve minority enrollment and tenured faculty representation. He challenged the MTSU community to engage in honest conversations to build bridges for the success of minority and low-income students.

Dr. McPhee thanked both speakers for sharing their concerns and assured them that the mission of the University is to work towards the academic success of all of our students with the ultimate goal to graduate them. He stated that information packets will be given to both speakers highlighting diversity-related programs and initiatives at MTSU. He welcomed them to have a conversation with him to voice their concerns and to discuss the efforts and resources that MTSU has put into diversity acknowledging that there is room for improvement.

Dr. McPhee expressed that it is important to possess a complete and accurate picture of the University's performance in these areas. He is confident that a comprehensive depiction reveals that MTSU has made and continues to make significant efforts in helping every student be successful in graduating, including our students of color and those who are economically disadvantaged. Dr. McPhee then detailed that MTSU is second only to Tennessee State University, a historically black institution, in the total number of black graduates produced by Tennessee public universities.

### **Comments by Trustee Freeman**

Chairman Smith stated that Trustee Freeman had requested to give comments. Trustee Freeman spoke of the honor of serving on this Board and his appreciation for the black alumni present at the meeting. He then stated it has been difficult to serve on the Board as the only African American as he believes that the Board does not care about people of color or poor white people. Trustee Freeman also expressed that he feels that he has been silenced when addressing diversity issues on campus and subjected to micro-aggressions. He then outlined the Freeman Fellows program and other initiatives that he is pursuing with the goal to have

students feel more attached to the University and to obtain a 100% graduation rate for program participants. He noted that he will pay for 50 students to attend the MTSU Scholars Academy and that his foundation will partner with organizations to provide mentoring and internship opportunities. In addition, he stated that his goal is to be one of the largest MTSU donors. Finally, Trustee Freeman contended that racism is present at MTSU and encouraged the Board and Dr. McPhee to take up the opportunity to address it.

#### **Approval of September 14, 2021, Meeting Minutes – Action**

Chairman Smith made the motion to approve the minutes from the September 14, 2021 meeting, and Trustee DeLay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

#### **Committee Report: Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics**

Committee Chair Pam Wright reported that the Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee met on November 9, 2021. The Committee approved the minutes from the August 24, 2021, meeting. The Committee report contained action items, unanimously approved by the Committee, and informational items for the Board's consideration. Several information items were also presented including performance metrics, enrollment, and athletics. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

#### **New Academic Degree Program: Master of Science in Data Science – Action**

Provost Byrnes reported to the Committee that in accordance with University Policy 251 Approval of Academic Programs, Units, and Modifications, states all academic actions that require review and approval by THEC must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

#### **Expedited Tenure – Action**

Professor Amy Aldridge Sanford has been reviewed for tenure by her department chair, department and college committee, and dean according to MTSU Policy 204 Tenure and the

respective college and department policies. The President and University Provost recommended that tenure be granted effective February 1, 2022.

**Policy Revision: Policy 301 Admissions – Action**

The proposed revisions update the policy to align with the revised Tennessee Code Title 49, Chapter 7, Part 1.

**Motion**

Vice Chair Karbowskiak made the motion to approve the action items recommended by the Committee and Trustee DeLay seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the action items carried unanimously.

**Committee Report: Audit and Compliance Committee**

Committee Chair Pete DeLay reported that the Audit and Compliance Committee met on November 9, 2021. The Committee approved the minutes from its August 24, 2021 meeting. The Committee report contained no action items. Several information items were presented including the results of an external review and a quarterly report on internal audit reports. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

**Committee Report: Executive and Governance Committee**

Vice Chair Karbowskiak reported that the Executive and Governance Committee met on November 9, 2021. The Committee approved the minutes from its August 24, 2021 meeting. The Committee report contained an action item, unanimously approved by the Committee, and an informational item to be considered by the Board. Materials outlining the action items were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

### **President's Compensation – Action**

Vice Chair Karbowski reported that Finance Chair Jacobs presented a recommendation to the Committee concerning the president's compensation, which was based on the evaluation of the president reported on at the May 2021 Executive and Governance Committee. The recommendation included a 2.7% increase in the president's base salary, as well as a \$25,000 one-time bonus. The salary increase would be retroactive to July 1, 2021 as was previously implemented for campus employees. The committee approved this recommendation unanimously.

### **2021 Self-Evaluation Results, Action for Improvement - Information**

#### **Motion**

Trustee Delay made the motion to approve the action item recommended by the Committee and Trustee Wright seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken, and upon hearing nay, Chairman Smith initiated a roll call vote where the motion to approve the action item carried by a vote of 8 to 1 (Trustee Freeman).

#### **Committee Report: Finance and Personnel Committee**

Trustee Jacobs reported that the Finance and Personnel Committee met on November 9, 2021. The Committee approved the minutes from its August 24, 2021 meeting. The Committee report contained an action item, unanimously approved by the Committee, and informational items to be considered by the Board. Materials outlining these actions were made available for review prior to the Board meeting and were contained in the Board notebooks.

### **2021-2022 October Revised Budget - Action**

Trustee Jacobs stated that Vice President Alan Thomas presented changes since the July (Original) Budget which included adjustments to tuition and fee revenue to include the remaining tuition increase previously approved by the Board; adjusted expenditure budgets to

reflect year-end balances as of June 30, 2021; and adjustments to auxiliary and restricted budgets based on information obtained since the July budget submission, including funding received under the American Rescue Plan (ARP).

The committee unanimously approved the revised budget as presented.

**Salary Data Update – Information**

**THEC 2022-23 Capital Outlay/Maintenance Recommendations - Information**

**THEC 2022-23 Operating Recommendations - Information**

**Philanthropy Report - Information**

**Motion**

Trustee Delay made the motion to approve the action item recommended by the Committee and Vice Chair Karbowski seconded the motion. A voice vote was taken and the motion to approve the action item carried unanimously.

**Report of the President**

Dr. McPhee thanked the Board for the opportunity to give updates on matters at the University since the last meeting.

**Enrollment Activity and Projections**

Dr. McPhee advised that the December 1 application and admit numbers are exceptionally high and promising this year. MTSU received more freshman applications than it ever has, 9,019 applications which is 58.9% over last year. This represents more freshmen applications than we have ever come including our peak enrollment year of 2011. Of these applicants, we have admitted a record total of 6,064 new freshman for 2022, which is a 21.6% increase from 2019. As anticipated, our transfer application admits are down by 10% due to significant decline in community college enrollment numbers. We have 52% of all our student population as transfer

students, so when community colleges lose enrollment, it impacts MTSU. Dr. McPhee thanked Dr. Sells for leading the recruiting and admissions teams in an extraordinary job.

Dr. Emily House, Guest Speaker via Zoom – Executive Director THEC, Black Male Success Initiative Report.

Dr. House presented an overview of THEC's Black Male Success Initiative report. First, Dr. House introduced and thanked Dr. Julie Roberts, for the work she had done with the task force comprised of community members, community college representatives, university representatives, and others committed to this discussion which included Trustee Freeman. She advised that the task force met four times in 2021 and focused a great deal on the arch of the discrepancies that exist between black male students and other students on campus. Dr. House outlined that she planned to speak on the margins of enrollment, persistence, and graduation.

The first margin, enrollment, includes strategies such as the summer bridge program being reinstated and targeting subpopulations to ensure success. The second margin, persistence, includes retention-oriented programs, mentorships, and completion grants targeted to certain subgroups. The third margin, graduation, is dependent on first two margins. Student can't graduate if they don't persist, they can't persist if they don't enroll. Dr. House spoke about current programmatic efforts and relationships with partnering organizations that can assist in addressing this issue. She concluded her remarks and welcomed any questions.

Dr. House affirmed that Dr. McPhee was very supportive of this effort at the onset. She stated that here is an appetite for conversation on the topic and, more importantly, execution on the related work. Trustee Freeman stated he attended every task force meeting and that we need to add more resources to ensure that African American males graduate. Dr. House noted that higher education needs to continually evaluate and assess the role financial aid plays in matriculation for all students regardless of their race or ethnicity.

### Fairness, Justice, and Equity Center (FJE)

Dr. McPhee advised that one of the strategic moves recommended by the State Collaborative on Reform Education (SCORE) and the consulting team, Education First 2019-2020, to advance the work of the MTSU College of Education was the creation of a center to discuss recruitment and support for diverse teacher candidates. As a result, the MTSU College of Education began the work to create the Fairness, Justice, and Equity Center (FJE). Dr. McPhee introduced Dr. Rick Vanosdall (Dean, College of Education), Dr. Michelle Stevens (Professor, Director of FJE), Dr. Deatrice Swett, Executive Director of the Teacher Fellowship, and Dr. Patrick Washington, Man-Up to discuss this effort.

Dr. Stevens informed the Board the FJE will offer educational opportunities, support, and advocacy for community partners. It will also partner with Memphis-based Man Up Teacher Fellowship, a nonprofit working to provide students in high-poverty areas access to high-quality male teachers that is led by Dr. Washington. Dr. Washington generally discussed the need for male minority representation in the classroom and shared a Real Men Teach video.

Chairman Smith and Dr. McPhee spoke further about their meeting with Senator Bill Frist and potential partnership opportunities with SCORE.

### Retirement of Vice President

Dr. McPhee announced that Bruce Petryshak, Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer (CIO), is retiring in January 2022. Vice President Petryshak has served MTSU since August 2010 and has been recognized as one of the top CIOs in the country. Dr. McPhee acknowledged the incredible work he has done and wished him well.

### Holiday Open House

Dr. McPhee invited the Board to his Holiday Open House on December 9. He wished everyone a healthy and happy holiday season and looks forward to exciting and productive new year.

Non-Public Executive Session

Chairman Smith called for a non-public executive session.

2:43 pm

**Adjournment**

Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 3:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

James Floyd,

Board Secretary

DRAFT





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

SUBJECT: **Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Athletics Committee**

DATE: April 5, 2022

PRESENTER: Pam Wright  
Committee Chair

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- Approval of New Academic Degree Programs
  - a) Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric
  - b) Master of Science in Supply Chain Management (elevation from a concentration to degree)
- Approval of Honorary Degrees





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **Approval of New Academic Degree Program  
B.S., Public Writing and Rhetoric**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

University Policy 251, Approval of Academic Programs, Units, and Modifications, states all academic actions that require review and approval by THEC must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

A New Academic Program Proposal for a Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric is attached for approval.



**Revised New Academic Program Proposal  
B.S. in Public Writing and Rhetoric**

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MIKE KRAUSE  
Executive Director

BILL LEE  
Governor

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
312 ROSA L. PARKS AVENUE, 9<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243  
(615) 741-3605

TO: President Sidney A. McPhee

FROM: Mike Krause

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Krause", is placed over the printed name.

SUBJECT: Middle Tennessee State University  
Letter of Notification: Public Writing and Rhetoric, Bachelor of Science

DATE: October 23, 2020

Thank you for the resubmission of the Letter of Notification (LON) for the Public Writing and Rhetoric, Bachelor of Science (BS) program. Per THEC Policy A1.0 *New Academic Programs: Approval Process*, the LON is evaluated on the following criteria: alignment with state master plan and institutional mission, need, sustainable demand, program costs and revenues; institutional capacity to deliver the proposed academic program; and avoidance of duplication.

After reviewing the revised LON, I approve Middle Tennessee State University's plan to develop the New Academic Program Proposal (NAPP) for the Public Writing and Rhetoric, BS program. It is understood the proposed program will be developed in accordance with the mission of MTSU and will meet the *Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education 2015-2025* degree completion and workforce development objectives.

The LON projects implementation of an approved Public Writing and Rhetoric, BS in Summer 2022. Please be advised that the Letter of Notification will be posted on the THEC website for public disclosure.

Attachment

cc: Mark Byrnes  
Nita Brooks  
Betty Dandridge Johnson  
Julie A. Roberts

Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
 Letter of Notification Evaluation  
 October 23, 2020



The evaluation of the Letter of Notification (LON) is in accordance with the *THEC Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process*. The evaluation is conducted by interested parties and THEC staff. The LON is posted on the THEC website for a 15-day period of comment by interested parties. Based on the internal and external evaluation, THEC will make a determination to support, not to support, or defer a decision based on a revised LON.

<b>Institution:</b> Middle Tennessee State University	<b>LON Submission Date:</b> July 13, 2020 <b>Resubmission Date:</b> Oct 12, 2020
<b>Academic Program, Degree Designation:</b> Public Writing and Rhetoric, Bachelor of Science (BS)	
<b>Proposed CIP Code:</b> 23.1301 (Writing, General)	
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b> Summer 2022	
<b>Time Period Posted on Website for Public Comment:</b> July 13 – July 28, 2020	

**Note: Comments in italics within this document should be addressed in the NAPP.**

Criteria	Comments
<b>Letter of Support from President/Chancellor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A letter of support dated July 2, 2020 from President McPhee was included in the LON submission.</li> <li>▪ The proposed program was approved by the MTSU Board of Trustees on June 18, 2019.</li> </ul>
<b>Overall Comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proposed Public Writing and Rhetoric is a Bachelor of Science (BS) program to strengthen student writing and written communication skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Background on Academic Program Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Department of English in the College of Liberal Arts proposes a B.S. in Public Writing and Rhetoric, a four-year interdisciplinary degree.</li> <li>▪ The proposed program will be a viable double major for students in other fields that require strong writing skills.</li> </ul>
<b>Purpose and Nature of Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proposed program will use faculty expertise from departments such as English, communication studies, and journalism and be delivered primarily on-ground.</li> <li>▪ Public writing and rhetoric courses will constitute the core of the proposed program to keep the emphasis on professional public writing and rhetoric. However, students will be able to take a range of complementary courses in other fields from curated electives.</li> <li>▪ Written communication was identified as the most sought-after skill in a 2019 survey. This proposed program will provide students with those skills to write for audiences and purposes across a variety of public and professional settings.</li> <li>▪ The primary learning outcomes for the proposed program are:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Analyze and produce effective and informed written documents in a range of public, technical, and professional genres.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exercise rhetorical awareness, adapting written communication to various audiences, purposes, and technological platforms.</li> <li>○ Design and present written information in ways that demonstrate competence across media and modes, including but not limited to matters of accessibility, universal design, visual and aural literacy, and facility with digital platforms.</li> <li>○ Collaborate effectively and ethically with others on complex public, professional, and academic projects that involve substantial written components.</li> </ul>
<b>Alignment with State Master Plan and Institutional Mission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The proposed program aligns with the State Master Plan by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Equipping students with flexible, transferable written communication skills for a rapidly changing global economy.</li> <li>○ Addressing a need for writing skills and helping close the writing skills gap.</li> <li>○ Supports Tennessee Transfer Pathways.</li> <li>○ Acknowledges that liberal arts degrees are workforce degrees.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ The proposed program is consistent with the MTSU's Institutional Mission in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prepares students to “communicate clearly and precisely and understand the proper role of free expression and civic engagement in our society”.</li> <li>○ Fosters a student-centered environment conducive to lifelong learning, personal development, and success.</li> <li>○ Develops and supports student learning through “effective teaching methods, emerging technologies, [and] experiential and integrative learning”, and public service to support institution, research, and communities throughout the region.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Capacity to Deliver the Proposed Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Department of English has capacity to support and deliver the proposed program with 42 tenured and tenure-track faculty, including five who specialize in rhetoric and writing studies.</li> <li>▪ With the interdisciplinary nature of the degree, the curriculum would have supplementary support from courses and faculty in areas such as communication studies, journalism, media arts, and business.</li> </ul>
<b>Existing programs offered at public and private Tennessee institutions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ There are no B.S. Public Writing and Rhetoric programs in the state of Tennessee.</li> <li>▪ Tennessee Technological University and University of Memphis have concentrations within a literature-centered English major.</li> </ul>
<b>Feasibility Study</b>	
<b>Student Interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A survey was administered to upper-division writing courses and circulated via a listserv for writing minors, over two-thirds of student respondents selected strongly agree or agree when asked if they</li> </ul>



	<p>would be interested in a bachelor’s degree focused on writing to include courses in public, digital, creative, and professional writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Approximately 50 percent identified they would change their major to the proposed Public Writing and Rhetoric at MTSU.</li> </ul>
<b>Local and regional need</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ MTSU replicated Brumberger and Lauer’s data-collection process and applied it to local and regional landscapes. Based on this process the following findings emerged: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In a 30-day period over 2,000 writing-centered positions were advertised in the greater Nashville area</li> <li>○ Public and technical writing genres – like proposals, reports, and blogs – are in high demand in Middle TN’s growing tech-based economy.</li> <li>○ Rhetorical skills – like process documentation and internal communications management – will continue to be needed as large companies establish new headquarters in the greater Nashville area.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Employer need/demand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the technical writing field is growing faster than the 7 percent average for other positions and is expected to increase through 2029.</li> <li>▪ US News and World Report listed technical writing as the second-best job in their list of creative and media careers for 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Future sustainable need/demand</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Letters of support were included from a variety of business and industry leaders including the Office of the Federal Public Defender Middle District of Tennessee, JKS Communications, Life is Brewing, Kirkland’s, Green Brier Distillery, MP&amp;F Strategic Communications, TN State Library and Archives, Mina and Vine, Discovery, Susan Severn Consulting, WSMV News 4, Adams and Reese, Trend Sales.</li> <li>▪ <i>The letters of support from JKS Communications, Life is Brewing, WW Norton, Kirklands, Discovery, WSMV (also needs to be on letterhead), need to be signed.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Program costs/revenues and THEC Financial Projection Form</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funds have been allocated to support adjunct faculty members to teach in the proposed program due to reassigned time for program coordinator.</li> <li>▪ Operating funds account for other costs in year one at \$8,000 and at least \$5,000 in subsequent years for the acquisition of software, classroom computers, and other hardware.</li> <li>▪ Revenue will be generated from student tuition and fees with projections showing a net gain from year one forward based on enrollment projections of ten full-time students and five part-time students in year one and increasing by ten full-time and consistent with five part-time students in year two moving forward.</li> </ul>
<b>Public comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No public comments were received.</li> </ul>

Julie Roberts, Ph.D.  
Associate Chief Academic Officer  
Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
312 Rosa Parks Avenue, 9th Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243

October 12, 2020

Dear Dr. Roberts,

Thank you for the quick and detailed response to the letter of notification submitted for a proposed Bachelor of Science degree in Public Writing and Rhetoric. We are excited about the possibility of creating this program to support the needs of the expanding workforce in Tennessee. In reply to our original submission, you have provided a list of items requiring additional clarification. Our responses to those issues are provided in the following section along with specifics of how each is addressed. A copy of the revised letter of notification reflecting the additional clarification is attached.

**Overall Comments:**

- *The proposal does not incorporate language associated with the rhetoric component of the proposed program including the proposed CIP code. Please address.*
  - **Response:** Thank you for noting the oversight in our original wording. We have incorporated language throughout the document to link the rhetoric component of the proposed program to the associated CIP code; below we have provided an example. Additionally, in response to a later comment, we added a specific learning outcome to the list of primary outcomes for the program (“Exercise rhetorical awareness, adapting written communication to various audiences, purposes, and technological platforms”) (page 5).

“With such findings in mind, we propose a new Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric, a four-year interdisciplinary degree housed in the Department of English within MTSU’s College of Liberal Arts. The degree draws inspiration from recently established writing and rhetoric majors at universities in other parts of the country. These programs are not grounded in the forms of writing traditionally associated with English departments: creative writing and literary analysis. Rather, drawing on the expertise of faculty who study and teach topics like technical writing, digital storytelling, and rhetorical analysis, they prepare students with the skills necessary to write effectively and adaptably in

public and professional contexts, including in expanding economic sectors like content strategy, social media writing, and digital publishing (see Appendix E as well as Aoun; Hartley).” (page 4)

- *Would a minor in public writing and rhetoric meet the intended aims of the proposed undergraduate degree and would it have an impact on more students?*
  - **Response:** We feel the major in public writing and rhetoric goes well beyond what a minor could provide and what is needed to be competitive in the area. It allows for us to develop a curriculum that emphasizes several components that work together to provide the knowledge, skills, and training necessary for success. Students in the program will have a complete and rich toolbox with which to tackle issues encountered in their careers. The following text was added to the revised document.

“Importantly, a major would allow us to establish a curricular framework for rhetoric and writing studies. At present, courses focused on topics like technical writing and digital rhetoric are offered in an a la carte manner to students with backgrounds in fields like literary studies or journalism but, in most cases, no prior exposure to the specialized study and practice of non-literary genres of writing. Unlike the minor, a major will allow for a scaffolded, systematic approach to helping students pursue the program’s learning outcomes and the professional opportunities for which those outcomes will prepare students.” (page 7)

- *What is the anticipated impact of the proposed program on the existing minor in writing?*
  - **Response:** We do not feel the proposed major will compete with the existing minor, and we do not anticipate an impact on the program. The following text was added to the Program Feasibility section of the document to address the question specifically.

“Moreover, the new degree program would not compete with the existing minor as students would still be able to minor in writing while majoring in Public Writing and Rhetoric. The minor itself is also currently being redesigned to emphasize creative writing, making it complementary to rather than redundant with the kinds of courses our proposed degree program would emphasize.” (page 7)

- *Why is the proposed program a bachelor of science and not a bachelor of arts degree?*
  - **Response:** The primary reason we chose a Bachelor of Science degree relates to the flexibility it will provide to students. The B.A. degree requires additional foreign language hours that would limit the student. The proposed program will pair nicely with other disciplines and allow for students to double major. The

B.A. requirements could also potentially delay their time to degree completion. The following text has been added to the document to address the type of degree being proposed.

“The degree will also be designed as a viable double major, allowing students in other fields that require strong writing skills (the sciences, journalism, pre-law, etc.) to double major without delaying time to degree, providing them an additional edge in a competitive labor market.

Given the 12 hours of foreign-language coursework required for a B.A., we propose this degree as a B.S. in order to streamline requirements that might otherwise delay students’ time to degree and to make it a more viable double major.” (page 4)

- *Program liaison will likely need to be updated.*
- **Response:** The program liaison information has been updated. (page 3)

### **Purpose and Nature of Program**

- *What are the proposed program outcomes and what is the proposed delivery method?*
  - **Response:** The following proposed program student learning outcomes have been added to the document.

“Our primary student learning outcomes for the proposed program are as follows:

- Analyze and produce effective and informed written documents in a range of public, technical, and professional genres.
  - Exercise rhetorical awareness, adapting written communication to various audiences, purposes, and technological platforms.
  - Design and present written information in ways that demonstrate competence across media and modes, including but not limited to matters of accessibility, universal design, visual and aural literacy, and facility with digital platforms.
  - Collaborate effectively and ethically with others on complex public, professional, and academic projects that involve substantial written components.” (page 5)
  - **Response:** The intent is for this program to be offered on-ground. We have added this detail to the revision. (page 4)
- *Provide a thorough overview of the nature of the proposed program including the other disciplines that will be engaged in the interdisciplinary program.*
    - **Response:** The program is proposed to not only include courses from the English Department at MTSU but also courses from areas such as communication studies,

journalism, and psychology. The interdisciplinary approach provides a strong foundation for students and a broader approach for understanding written communication and rhetoric. We also note as part of the analysis, students completing this program have many career opportunities that span typical professional boundaries. For example, we would expect students to go into careers including educational technology, publishing, and professional communication (page 5). The following text was added to the revised document.

“While key courses will be taught by faculty with training and expertise in rhetoric and writing studies, this will also be an interdisciplinary program, incorporating courses in such areas as communication studies, journalism, and psychology. For example, taking JOUR 3600 – Digital and Media Literacy would help PWR students learn to navigate and assess the credibility of multimedia sources on which they might build in writing projects. Taking PSY 4390 – Persuasion would introduce PWR students to theories and research on interpersonal influence that can be applied to written communication. We have communicated with the faculty responsible for offering those and other relevant courses, and they are enthusiastic about this degree program. While PWR courses themselves would constitute the core of the major in order to keep the emphasis on professional and public writing and rhetoric skills, the range of complementary courses in other fields would provide a rich array of curated electives from which for PWR students can choose.” (page 4)

### Local and regional need

- *Please connect the local and regional need directly to the proposed program; summary information from the feasibility study should be incorporated into the LON document.*
  - **Response:** We have provided additional research and analysis to connect the proposed program to local and regional need. We feel strongly that the impact on Middle Tennessee could be significant. The following text was added to the revised document.

“As documented in the feasibility study, a report highlighted by the State of Tennessee’s Department of Labor and Workforce Development found that “Written Expression” and “Written Comprehension” rank among the skills employers value most (see Appendix B). Our feasibility study notes there is a supply surplus for jobs in the BLS categories most directly associated with writing (i.e., more applicants than there are positions). The study also notes the likelihood of “individuals from other backgrounds seeking ... positions [as writers]” (see Appendix B). Against this backdrop, PWR stands to make its graduates distinctly competitive for these positions by offering them specialized training not available at most colleges and universities. PWR’s graduates would have an advantage over those whose skill sets are not as well-fitted to the positions covered the relevant BLS categories, including those moving to Tennessee from other regions with whom graduates of Tennessee’s public universities are competing for jobs.

We also want to note that these are far from the only professions PWR graduates would be prepared for. We take seriously the state master plan’s observation that today’s college graduates need to be adept at “nimble adaptation to emerging economic opportunities” and plan for this major to prepare students for emerging job categories, not just well-established ones. As documented in “The Evolution of Technical Communication: An Analysis of Industry Job Postings,” new and emerging technologies are creating a host of new writing-centered occupations (Brumberger and Lauer). The authors of that study provide a list of over 50 such occupations, including “social media writer,” “medical writer,” “and “content strategist.”

To understand the local and regional demand for PWR graduates, we replicated Brumberger and Lauer’s data-collection process and applied it to our local landscape. First, we identified the eight most populous metropolitan areas in Tennessee using publicly available data from the U.S. Census. Over a five-day period (September 10-15, 2020), we used Indeed, a well-known search engine for job postings, to conduct a keyword search for each job title included in Brumberger and Lauer’s study (e.g., “content strategist”) within a 25-mile radius of those eight areas. Jobs data was collected for postings published within 30 days of the five days during which our search took place. Finally, we compiled our data into a table and a map (see Appendix E) to illustrate the likelihood of employment for PWR graduates.

Based on our short study, we noted the following about MTSU’s region:

- Over 2,000 writing-centered positions are available in the greater Nashville area.
- Public and technical writing genres—like proposals, reports, and blogs—are in high demand in Middle Tennessee’s growing tech-based economy.
- Rhetorical skills—like process documentation and internal communications management—will continue to be needed as large companies (e.g., Amazon) establish new headquarters in the greater Nashville area.

While our study is just a snapshot of the local and regional demand for PWR grads, our key findings indicate a growing need for a nimble major that can both prepare students for existing careers and ensure they have the skills for jobs that will grow and change based on economic, regional, and community needs.

Alongside these key findings and jobs data, we also recognize the proposed program’s opportunity to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and work within the MTSU community. In preparing this proposal, rhetoric and writing faculty communicated with chairs and deans in other departments and colleges, including the School of Journalism and the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, who indicated their interest in directing students to this degree as a double major.” (pages 8-9)

## Employer need/demand

- *Please connect the employer need/demand to the proposed program.*
  - **Response:** In an effort to provide a stronger indication of the need for the proposed program, we conducted an analysis and provided additional information as noted in the previous response regarding local and regional need. We have added the following text to the employer need/demand section as well.

“This degree will prepare students specifically for these jobs and the positions noted in the previous section and collected in Appendix E in a way and structure not provided by extant programs.

As one example of growth in the positions collected in Appendix E, the Occupational Outlook Handbook produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that technical writing is a field growing faster than average with a 7% expected increase through 2029. Those in these positions are often employed by IT organizations and assist in the management of information and social media platforms. Additionally, *U.S. News and World Report* listed technical writing as the second-best job in their list of creative and media careers for 2020 (see “Best Creative and Media Careers”).” (page 9)

- *The feasibility study states there is currently a “supply surplus” – more job seekers than jobs advertised and that the “data does not allow us to empirically confirm the increased competitiveness.” How will MTSU ensure employment for graduates of the proposed program?*
  - **Response:** A primary consideration in the development of this proposal was the enhance competitiveness afforded to potential graduates of this program. While we cannot guarantee employment of any student, we do feel that all indicators are positive related to career opportunities and competitive advantage. The proposed program is structured to prepare students to be successful across the numerous opportunities mentioned in the previous section regarding local and regional need. Additionally, Appendix E has been added to the document on page 42 providing the data used in our analysis of these opportunities.

## Future sustainable need/demand

- *Please include letters of support from perspective employers.*
  - **Response:** In addition to the original letters of support submitted, six new letters have been obtained that highlight interest from perspective employers for graduates of the proposed program. The following text was added to the revised Letter of Notification.

“We also received letters of support from several regional employers, which are attached to this document as Appendix D. Many of the letters specifically address interest in hiring graduates from the proposed program as well as recognize the need for a program focused on writing and rhetoric. For example, Brittany Garman from Mina and Vine notes the importance of the proposed degree as it relates to content marketing and management of the company’s online presence. Specifically, she states that “keen writing skills will never go out of fashion and can give someone a competitive edge.” Additionally, she requests that we keep her informed of our progress and that “graduates would be of most interest” for the company.

Kelly Trimble from Digital at Discovery described the changing landscape in which organizations exist and the importance of the knowledge and skills provided by the proposed program to their environment. The realities of “understanding niche audiences, adjusting language per digital platform, working hand-in-hand with visual and UX designers, amplifying online content through programming strategies, and writing to boost search engine results” are highlighted in the letter of support along with interest in considering our students as “candidates for positions in Digital at Discovery.”

Forrest Sanders, a reporter, videographer, and editor at WSMV News 4 in Nashville and a former MTSU graduate, provides support for the program. He states that “while many young graduates are well-versed in social media, they don’t understand the mechanics of professional writing and the legal repercussions of mistakes.” He also notes that the proposed program could help students through proper preparation.

Joseph Donnelly from Trend Sales expressed his interest in the program by stating “I would be interested in hiring graduates of this new major.” Andy Nelson from Green Brier Distillery mentions benefiting from students having this degree, and Maria Sochor from the Tennessee State Library and Archives states graduates “would likely make standout job applicants and ultimately, more impactful professionals.” Additionally, Mike Tesh from Kirklands mentions support for graduate from the program, and Alicia Thompson states that “as an independent and employee-owned company that employs people throughout the country, I will absolutely suggest that hiring managers look to some of the first graduates of MTSU’s Public Writing and Rhetoric program.” (pages 9-10)

### **Program costs/revenues and THEC Financial Projection Form**

- *Page 2 of the LON states “No additional faculty hires will be required.” However, funds are allocated for adjunct faculty starting in year one – please reconcile.*
  - **Response:** Thank you for noting the confusion. A note was made on page 4 stating that no full-time faculty will be required for the program, but there will be adjunct faculty utilized to support reassigned time for the program coordinator. This is noted in the financial projections provided in Appendix A (page 14) and in the table provided on pages 10-11.



Thank you again for the opportunity to provide additional information about this exciting new degree program and to revise the letter of notification. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you during the evaluation of a New Academic Program Proposal.

Sincerely,



Mark Byrnes  
University Provost

**Revised Letter of Notification to Develop a New Academic Program  
Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric**

**Submitted to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
by Middle Tennessee State University**

**October 2021**

## **Proposed Program Name**

Public Writing and Rhetoric

## **Proposed Degree Designation**

Bachelor of Science (B.S.)

## **Proposed CIP Code**

23.1301 – Writing, General

**Definition:** A program that focuses on writing for applied and liberal arts purposes. Includes instruction in writing and document design in multiple genres, modes, and media; writing technologies; research, evaluation, and use of information; editing and publishing; theories and processes of composing; rhetorical theories, traditions, and analysis; communication across audiences, contexts, and cultures; and practical applications for professional, technical, organizational, academic, and public settings.

## **Proposed Implementation**

Summer 2022

## **Academic Program Liaison (APL) Name and Contact Information**

Dr. Nita Brooks

Interim Vice Provost for Academic Programs Middle Tennessee State University

Cope Administration Building, Rm. 111 Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Office: (615) 494-7611

Email: [nita.brooks@mtsu.edu](mailto:nita.brooks@mtsu.edu)

## **Background Concerning Academic Program Development**

A group of English faculty with backgrounds in the field of rhetoric and writing studies explored the viability of a standalone degree focused on public, technical, and/or digital writing and rhetoric. This was inspired by degree trends in other parts of the country (see Clegg et al.; Giberson, Nugent, and Ostergaard), persistent student interest in writing classes, and widespread consensus about the importance of written communication skills for college graduates (see NACE Staff). After consulting with the dean of the College of Liberal Arts as well as faculty in communication studies, journalism, media arts, basic and applied sciences, and English, it was determined that a Public Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) degree—designed as a viable double major for students in other fields—would best serve the needs of the widest range of students, addressing curricular needs and student interests across the university and region.

## Purpose and Nature of Program

According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers' 2018 *Job Outlook* survey, written communication skills are one of the top three things employers look for on resumes, with 80.3% of employers explicitly looking for evidence that candidates have such skills. Written communication became the most sought-after skill in the 2019 survey (see NACE Staff). Developing effective, rhetorically flexible public writing skills is crucial for contemporary students, especially those interested in the wide array of writing-intensive jobs available in the current labor market (see Appendix E). Teachers and researchers in rhetoric and writing studies, a well-established field focused on teaching students to be effective and adaptable written communicators, are specifically trained and prepared to teach students how to write effectively for complex public audiences, which often involves addressing multiple sets of stakeholders whose interests and perspectives sometimes overlap and sometimes conflict (for more on rhetoric and writing studies, see Phelps and Ackerman). However, majors focused on such writing skills are sorely lacking on US campuses. For example, in 2017-18, 32,098 students graduated from American postsecondary institutions with degrees in the National Center for Education Statistics' general "English language and literature" category, but only 590 students graduated with degrees in the corresponding "writing" category (National Center for Education Statistics). Often, writing courses are only offered in an unstructured, piecemeal manner. Given the mismatch between widespread public and professional demand for strong writers and the lack of degree programs training such writers, we propose a Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric (PWR). The program builds on existing student interest in writing and a core of nationally recognized rhetoric and writing faculty at MTSU.

We emphasize "public" in this degree's name because, for today's college students and graduates, a narrow set of career-specific professional writing skills are important but no longer sufficient. We live in an era when digital technologies can cause pieces of writing to circulate far beyond narrow professional or academic audiences and when learning to cultivate a public following is a key skill for aspiring professional writers. As rhetoric and writing scholar Ashley Holmes describes it, being an effective public writer involves taking "the writing and research we do in college and put[ting] it to practical and civic use in our communities in the hopes of contributing toward positive social change," along the way "anticipating the ways we will publish and circulate our writing to reach ... public audiences" (Holmes 199-200; for other work on the well-established importance of public writing and rhetoric, consult Weisser; Ackerman and Coogan). PWR will leverage many students' desire to use writing to make a difference in the world and their local communities, providing the training they need to write effectively in a range of public and professional settings. Even for students primarily interested in writing as a profession, the rise of freelance work and the gig economy has made writing for public audiences an indispensable ability. For example, the pitch guidelines for the popular entertainment website *Polygon* repeatedly emphasize that writers need to explain why their pieces will reach a "broader audience" beyond stakeholders in industry and academia (Plante). Thus, even for students primarily interested in writing in professional contexts, being able to write for and appeal to broader public audiences is a particularly important, particularly complex skill, hence our decision to foreground "public writing and rhetoric" rather than "professional writing" or "technical communication," even though professional and technical training will be a significant part of the degree and PWR faculty have expertise in those areas. "Public" provides a

broader but still identifiable and curricularly coherent umbrella for this program.

PWR will be a four-year interdisciplinary degree housed in MTSU's College of Liberal Arts. The degree draws inspiration from recently established though still rare writing and rhetoric majors at universities in other parts of the country (e.g., the Public and Professional Writing major at the University of Pittsburgh, the Professional and Public Writing major at Michigan State University, and the Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies major at the University of Kentucky). These programs prepare students with the skills necessary to write effectively and adaptably in public and professional contexts, including in expanding economic sectors like content strategy, social media writing, and digital publishing (see Appendix E as well as Aoun; Hartley). There are currently no such degree programs in Tennessee. The PWR program also builds on MTSU's success with other public-focused programs, including the university's Public History program.

As mentioned above, the degree will draw on the existing strengths of a core set of faculty housed in MTSU's English Department as well as interdisciplinary faculty and courses across campus. Unlike the majority of MTSU's English faculty, PWR's core faculty do not study and teach courses focused on literary studies. Rather, they possess backgrounds in rhetoric and writing studies. More specifically, the core faculty have backgrounds in areas like technical writing, experiential learning, writing with community partners, and digital rhetoric (e.g., crafting and creating effective writing-intensive digital materials for public-/consumer-facing media like podcasts and video games).

The PWR program would have very little overlap with the existing B.A. in English. The set of required core courses for all concentrations in the English major are entirely focused on the study and analysis of literature (those courses are Introduction to Literary Studies, two British literature surveys, and one American literature survey). Upper-division courses in the English major largely focus on literary analysis and, to a lesser extent, creative writing workshops on genres like poetry, fiction, and plays. When students do take a writing-focused upper-division course with PWR faculty, it is typically an isolated elective rather than a required, scaffolded part of their English degree. PWR's set of core courses and recommended electives are entirely different than the English major's and will focus on preparing students to write in a range of civic, digital, and professional contexts for public audiences beyond the university with minimal emphasis on analyzing and writing in literary genres. As noted above, all concentrations in MTSU's English major are built around a 12-hour core of literature-focused courses, and courses focused on types of writing other than literary analysis are almost exclusively offered as à la carte upper-division electives rather than in any sort of organized curriculum that would afford students a structured degree plan focused on the development of publicly and professionally applicable writing skills. Because such a writing-focused major is not feasible within the English Department given the departmental faculty's and curriculum's general focus on literature, a college-level major in PWR will allow students a new and unique degree program facilitated by faculty with expertise in public writing and rhetoric, designed in collaboration with interdisciplinary writing and rhetoric-focused courses currently scattered across MTSU, and built around a set of core courses that will give students a set of practically applicable, rhetorically flexible writing skills relevant to a range of public and professional audiences and purposes (see Appendix J).

Additionally, the degree will also be designed as a viable double major, allowing students in other fields that require strong writing skills (the sciences, journalism, pre-law, etc.) to double major without delaying time to degree, providing them an additional edge in a competitive labor market. Given the 12 hours of foreign-language coursework required for a B.A., we propose this degree as a B.S. in order to streamline requirements that might otherwise delay students' time to degree and to make it a more viable double major.

The program will be offered as an on-campus program. While core courses will be taught by faculty with training and expertise in rhetoric and writing studies, this will also be an interdisciplinary program, incorporating courses in such areas as communication studies, journalism, and interactive media. For example, taking JOUR 3600 – Digital and Media Literacy would help PWR students learn to navigate and assess the credibility of multimedia sources on which they might build in writing projects. Taking COMM 3260 – Communication in Healthcare Organizations would introduce PWR students to the specific ways writing circulates and functions in healthcare professions. We have communicated with the faculty responsible for offering those and other relevant courses, and they are enthusiastic about this degree program (program support letters are provided in Appendix D). While PWR courses themselves would constitute the core of the major in order to keep the emphasis on professionally applicable public writing and rhetoric skills, the range of complementary courses in other fields would provide a rich array of curated electives from which for PWR students can choose. Appendix J provides two pathways which include course lists and minors. Additionally, the pathways highlight the inclusion of experiential learning opportunities for students. No full-time faculty hires will be required to teach in the program.

Throughout this letter, we identify a range of professional options that graduates of this program would have; however, in terms of the codified categories tracked by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Public Writing and Rhetoric major can be correlated with the Writers and Authors category (SOC Code 27-3043, median wage \$61,820) and Technical Writers category (SOC Code 27-3042, median wage \$70,930). Combined, those two categories employ over 200,000 people and are projected to add over 15,000 new jobs in the coming decade. We anticipate graduates going on to careers as copyeditors, writers of public policy, and technical writers. The degree would also prepare students to enroll in graduate programs in rhetoric and writing studies, one of English studies' largest subfields. The graduates of these programs move into careers not only in academia but also educational technology, publishing, and professional communication.

Our primary learning outcomes for the proposed program are as follows:

- Analyze and produce effective and informed written documents in a range of public, technical, and professional genres.
- Exercise rhetorical awareness, adapting written communication to various audiences, purposes, and technological platforms.
- Design and present written information in ways that demonstrate competence across media and modes, including but not limited to matters of accessibility, universal design, visual and aural literacy, and facility with digital platforms.
- Collaborate effectively and ethically with others on complex public, professional, and academic projects that involve substantial written components.

## Alignment with State Master Plan and Institutional Mission

This degree program aligns with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's 2015-2025 master plan as follows:

- *Equips students with flexible, transferable written communication skills for a rapidly changing global economy.* As the master plan notes, our dynamic economy requires “nimble adaptation to emerging economic opportunities.” While degrees targeted to specific vocations and careers remain important, it is at least as important that students have written communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills they can adapt and transfer to emerging and future economic and professional arenas (see Aoun; Hartley). This degree is designed to help students develop such skills.
- *Addresses a recognized need for writing skills and helps close the writing skills gap.* The master plan notes that the majority of students entering TBR institutions have “writing skills that are insufficient to enable them to successfully complete their degree.” While bridge programs and supplementary instruction offer some avenues to address this issue and related skills gaps, the Public Writing and Rhetoric major provides students a pathway to develop their rhetorical and writing skills across their college career rather than only frontloading writing instruction at the end of high school and beginning of college, the outcomes of which are not as substantial as when students have the opportunity to develop such skills across their college careers. In addition to aligning with the master plan, this program is aligned with writing studies research on how to best prepare students to transfer their writing skills across contexts (see Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak).
- *Meshes with transfer pathways.* The degree will be designed with a lightweight, flexible curricular core and interdisciplinary options that will make it a viable major for students who transfer to MTSU without delaying their time to degree.
- *Acknowledges that liberal arts degrees are workforce degrees.* Without sacrificing the academic rigor of the liberal arts, the degree aligns with the master plan's claim that “liberal arts degrees are workforce degrees.” It integrates the liberal arts with technical education and prepares students to communicate the value of a liberal arts education in professional settings.

This degree program aligns with MTSU's institutional mission as follows:

- *Prepares students to “communicate clearly and precisely and understand the proper role of free expression and civic engagement in our society.”* While the degree will include technical and professional writing courses, its curriculum and titular emphasis on “public” writing and rhetoric will emphasize connections between effective communication and civic engagement.
- *Fosters a student-centered environment conducive to lifelong learning, personal development, and success.* The student-centered methods employed by those teaching core courses in the degree will prepare students to engage writing and rhetoric as lifelong skills that require lifelong development and practice. Students will become self-sufficient at adapting to new writing technologies and styles throughout their professional and civic lives.
- *Develops and supports student learning through “effective teaching methods, emerging technologies, [and] experiential and integrative learning,” and “develops and sustains academic partnerships, entrepreneurial activities, and public service to support instruction,*

*research, and communities throughout the region.*” Building on rhetoric and writing studies’ rich history of pedagogical innovation, community partnerships, and publicly engaged research, the degree will offer students numerous curricular and extracurricular opportunities to partner with local organizations and companies through experiential learning and service opportunities.

### **Institutional Capacity to Develop and Support Degree**

The Department of English currently employs 42 tenured and tenure-track faculty, including five who specialize in rhetoric and writing studies and are particularly well-trained and equipped to develop and teach the degree program’s key courses. The program would also expand the audience and support for existing courses in the English curriculum (e.g., ENGL 4605 – Advanced Composition; ENGL 4640 – Advanced Technical Writing; ENGL 4670 – Special Topics in Writing) and provide professionalization and teaching opportunities for students in the department’s M.A. and Ph.D. programs.

Given the interdisciplinary nature of the degree, its curriculum would have supplementary support from courses and faculty in such areas as communication studies, journalism, interactive media, and sociology. In addition to faculty, students pursuing the degree would be supported by dedicated advisors in MTSU’s College of Liberal Arts as well as the resources of the James E. Walker Library, which provides access to a wide array of texts and databases relevant to rhetoric and writing. Finally, they would be served by the English Department’s in-house professional development coordinator as well as the College of Liberal Arts liaisons in MTSU’s career services center.

### **Existing Programs Offered at Public and Private Tennessee Institutions**

There are no standalone degrees of this kind in Tennessee. While a few universities offer concentrations in professional writing (Tennessee Technological University – Professional and Technical Communication concentration; University of Memphis – Professional Writing concentration), these concentrations are nested within literature-centered English majors that restrict the number of writing-focused classes students can take and do not appeal to many students who would be interested in a writing major decoupled from core requirements in literary study. Thus, this major would be unique in its focus on public, professional, and digital forms of writing from start to finish.

### **Program Feasibility**

A feasibility study was conducted by MTSU’s Business and Economic Research Center in Fall 2019. The complete study is included as Appendix B. Below is a summary of key findings from the study as well as additional findings based on supplementary research conducted by rhetoric and writing faculty.



### *Student Interest*

At the local level, this major will build on the success of MTSU's writing minor. With total enrollment of 94 as of Fall 2019, the minor has remained strong even as enrollments in other areas of the liberal arts have decreased. In a survey administered in upper-division writing courses and circulated via a listserv for writing minors (see Appendix C), over two-thirds of student respondents selected "strongly agree" or "agree" in response to the following: "If MTSU offered a bachelor's degree focused on writing (including core courses in public, digital, creative, and professional writing), I would be interested in pursuing that degree." Approximately 50% agreed or strongly agreed that they would change their major to Public Writing and Rhetoric. These findings suggest that for students interested in writing but not the literary core of the English major, the Public Writing and Rhetoric degree's potential draw is substantial.

Moreover, the new degree program would not compete with the existing minor as students would still be able to minor in writing while majoring in Public Writing and Rhetoric. The minor itself is also currently being redesigned to emphasize creative writing, making it complementary to rather than redundant with the kinds of courses our proposed degree program would emphasize. Importantly, a major would allow us to establish a curricular framework for rhetoric and writing studies. At present, courses focused on topics like technical writing and digital rhetoric are offered in an a la carte manner to students with backgrounds in fields like literary studies or journalism but, in most cases, no prior exposure to the specialized study and practice of non-literary genres of writing. Unlike the minor, a major will allow for a scaffolded, systematic approach to helping students pursue the program's learning outcomes and the professional opportunities for which those outcomes will prepare students.

### *Local and Regional Demand*

As documented in the feasibility study, a report highlighted by the State of Tennessee's Department of Labor and Workforce Development found that "Written Expression" and "Written Comprehension" rank among the skills employers value most (see Appendix B). Our feasibility study notes there is a supply surplus for jobs in the BLS categories most directly associated with writing (i.e., more applicants than there are positions). The study also notes the likelihood of "individuals from other backgrounds seeking ... positions [as writers]" (see Appendix B). Against this backdrop, PWR stands to make its graduates distinctly competitive for these positions by offering them specialized training not available at most colleges and universities. PWR's graduates would have an advantage over those whose skill sets are not as well-fitted to the positions covered the relevant BLS categories, including those moving to Tennessee from other regions with whom graduates of Tennessee's public universities are competing for jobs.

We also note that these are far from the only professions for which PWR graduates would be prepared. We take seriously the state master plan's observation that today's college graduates need to be adept at "nimble adaptation to emerging economic opportunities" and plan for this major to prepare students for emerging job categories, not just well-established ones. As documented in "The Evolution of Technical Communication: An Analysis of Industry Job Postings," new and emerging technologies are creating a host of new writing-centered

occupations (Brumberger and Lauer). The authors of that study provide a list of over 50 such occupations, including “social media writer,” “medical writer,” “and “content strategist.”

To understand the local and regional demand for PWR graduates, we replicated Brumberger and Lauer’s data-collection process and applied it to our local and regional landscapes. First, we identified the eight most populous metropolitan areas in Tennessee using publicly available data from the U.S. Census. Over a five-day period (September 10-15, 2020), we used Indeed, a well-known search engine for job postings, to conduct a keyword search for each job title (e.g., “content strategist”) included in Brumberger and Lauer’s study within a 25-mile radius of those eight metropolitan areas. Jobs data was collected for postings published within 30 days of the five days during which our search took place. Finally, we compiled our data into a table and a map (see Appendix E) to illustrate the likelihood of employment for PWR graduates.

Based on our short study, we noted the following about MTSU’s region:

- Over 2,000 writing-centered positions were available in the greater Nashville area.
- Public and technical writing genres—like proposals, reports, and blogs—are in high demand in Middle Tennessee's growing tech-based economy.
- Rhetorical skills—like process documentation and internal communications management—will continue to be needed as large companies (e.g., Amazon) establish new headquarters in the greater Nashville area.

While our study is just a snapshot of the local and regional demand for PWR grads, our key findings indicate a growing need for a nimble major that can both prepare students for existing careers and ensure they have the skills for jobs that will grow and change based on economic, regional, and community needs.

Alongside these key findings and jobs data, we also recognize the proposed program’s opportunity to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and work within the MTSU community. In preparing this proposal, rhetoric and writing faculty communicated with chairs and deans in other departments and colleges, including the School of Journalism and the College of Basic and Applied Sciences, who indicated their interest in directing students to this degree as a double major.

While the number of such degree programs has grown steadily across the country, because this would be the first full-fledged degree of its kind in the region and the state, it would offer students unique professional opportunities and allow MTSU to recruit students interested in this particular degree without oversaturating the labor market due to analogous, redundant programs at other institutions.

### *Employer Need/Demand*

As noted in the feasibility study, data shows that Tennessee businesses employed 5,352 individuals as writers in 2017. Annual new employment is expected to be around 510 jobs per year, yet in 2018, only 99 students received diplomas in some form of writing from all state

institutions combined. This degree will prepare students specifically for these jobs, as well as the positions noted in the previous section and collected in Appendix E, in a structured way not provided by extant programs.

As one example of growth in the positions collected in Appendix E, the Occupational Outlook Handbook produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that technical writing is a field growing faster than average with a 7% expected increase through 2029. Those in these positions are often employed by IT organizations and assist in the management of information and social media platforms. Additionally, *U.S. News and World Report* listed technical writing as the second-best job in their list of creative and media careers for 2020 (see “Best Creative and Media Careers”).

Because we also plan for PWR to be a viable double major for students pursuing other degrees, employers’ marked interest in strong writing skills across career fields is also relevant. We reiterate a previously cited figure from the 2019 *Job Outlook Survey*: 82.0% of employers look for evidence of written communication skills on applicants’ resumes (NACE Staff). While we acknowledge some of the difficulties involved in drawing direct correlations between this information and the draw of the major, it indicates that the major will provide students with skills sought after by employers and provides a significant argument for recruiting students to the major.

#### *Future Sustainable Need/Demand*

We also received letters of support from several regional employers, which are attached to this document as Appendix D. Many of the letters specifically express interest in hiring graduates from the proposed program and recognize the need for a program focused on writing and rhetoric. For example, Brittany Garman from Mina and Vine notes the importance of the proposed degree as it relates to content marketing and management of the company’s online presence. Specifically, she states that “keen writing skills will never go out of fashion and can give someone a competitive edge.” Additionally, she requests that we keep her informed of our progress and that “graduates would be of most interest” for the company.

Kelly Trimble from Digital at Discovery describes the changing landscape in which organizations exist and the importance of the knowledge and skills provided by the proposed program to their environment. The realities of “understanding niche audiences, adjusting language per digital platform, working hand-in-hand with visual and UX designers, amplifying online content through programming strategies, and writing to boost search engine results” are highlighted in the letter of support along with interest in considering our students as “candidates for positions in Digital at Discovery.”

Forrest Sanders, a reporter, videographer, and editor at WSMV News 4 in Nashville as well as a former MTSU graduate, provides support for the program. He states that “while many young graduates are well-versed in social media, they don’t understand the mechanics of professional writing and the legal repercussions of mistakes.” He also notes that the proposed program could help students through proper preparation.

Joseph Donnelly from Trend Sales expressed his interest in the program by stating “I would be interested in hiring graduates of this new major.” Andy Nelson from Green Brier Distillery mentions benefiting from students having this degree, and Maria Sochor from the Tennessee State Library and Archives states graduates “would likely make standout job applicants and ultimately, more impactful professionals.” Additionally, Mike Tesh from Kirklands expresses support for graduates from the program, and Alicia Thompson states that “as an independent and employee-owned company that employs people throughout the country, I will absolutely suggest that hiring managers look to some of the first graduates of MTSU’s Public Writing and Rhetoric program.”

**Program Costs/Revenues**

Costs associated with developing this degree will be minimal and include the following.

<b>Cost</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
\$4800/year	Adjunct faculty needed to support reassigned time for program coordinator.
\$500/year	Funding required for promotion and recruitment, including printed materials, support for on- and off-campus presentations, and digital promotion.
\$2500/year	Funding for travel to support program faculty’s attendance and presentations at conferences relevant to the development and maintenance of the proposed degree (e.g., Association of Rhetoric and Writing Studies Conference, Conference on College Composition and Communication, and the Conference on Community Writing).
\$8000/first year \$5000/subsequent year	Support for campus-wide writing and rhetoric conferences, workshops, and similar activities. Extra funds in first year and a portion of funds in subsequent years to be used for the acquisition of software, classroom computers, and other hardware that will allow students to access and develop proficiency with digital writing and publishing platforms.

Revenues come from tuition and fees and are conservatively estimated, using 2019-20 rates without adjustment for inflation in future years. We also do not include out-of-state tuition in our revenue estimates.

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Weisser, Christian R. *Moving Beyond Academic Discourse: Composition Studies and the Public Sphere*. Southern Illinois UP, 2002.

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## Implementation Timeline

Provide a timeline which includes the following items: Accreditation considerations for professional disciplinary accreditation organizations and/or SACSCOC, if applicable.

- *Accreditation considerations:* There is no disciplinary accrediting body for this program, and it will not require a SACSCOC visit.
- *External review:* July 2021
- *Estimated date of submissions of external review report to THEC and MTSU:* August 2021
- *Institution's response to review:* September 2021
- *Proposed date of MTSU Board of Trustees meeting at which NAPP will be considered for approval:* December 8, 2021
- *Proposed date of THEC meeting at which NAPP will be considered for approval:* 2022 Winter Quarterly Meeting

## Curriculum

An adequately structured curriculum which meets the stated objectives of the academic program, and reflects breadth, depth, theory and practice appropriate to the discipline and the level of the degree. The curriculum should be compatible with disciplinary accreditation, where applicable, and meet the criteria for the general education core as well as articulation and transfer.

### *Program Learning Outcomes*

Students in the Public Writing and Rhetoric program will learn to

- analyze and produce effective and informed written documents in a range of public, technical, and professional genres;
- exercise rhetorical awareness, adapting written communication to various audiences, purposes, and technological platforms;
- design and present written information in ways that demonstrate competence across media and modes, including but not limited to matters of accessibility, universal design, visual and aural literacy, and facility with digital platforms; and
- collaborate effectively and ethically with others on complex public, professional, and academic projects that involve substantial written components.

Two example pathways are provided in Appendix J, which provide course lists along with recommended minors.

### *Academic Program Requirements*

Include the minimum number of SCH overall, required curriculum, (course prefix and number, title, SCH) and any special requirements including theses, internships.

<b>General Education</b>		<b>41 credits</b>
<b>Public Writing and Rhetoric Major Core</b>		<b>12 credits</b>
PWR 3000*	Public Writing and Rhetoric	3 credits
PWR 4000	Experimental Writing	3 credits

ENGL 4605	Advanced Composition	3 credits
PWR 4999*	Writing Your Future (Senior Capstone)	3 credits
<b>Public Writing and Rhetoric Electives</b>		<b>24 credits</b>
Students will take 2 of the following writing and rhetoric courses	PWR 3010* – Community Writing PWR 3020 – Digital Writing PWR 3030 – Cultural Rhetorics	6 credits
Students will take 1 of the following professionalization courses	ENGL 3620 – Professional Writing ENGL 4640* – Advanced Technical Writing ENGL 4600 – Writing Internship	3 credits
Students will take 2 electives of their choice from the upper-division English curriculum	ENGL 3000 – Introduction to Literary Studies <b>or</b> ENGL 3007 – Writing and the Literary Imagination <b>and</b> any 3000- or 4000- level ENGL course  or  Any 2 of the following:  ENGL 2500 – Introduction to Creative Writing ENGL 3630 – Creative Nonfiction Workshop ENGL 3645 – Fiction Writing ENGL 3655 – Poetry Writing ENGL 3665 – Playwriting ENGL 4670 – Special Topics in Writing	6 credits
Students will take 2 of the following linguistics and/or teaching-focused courses	ENGL 3505 – Writing Workshop Methodologies ENGL 3510 – English Grammar and Usage for Educators ENGL 3555 – Tutoring Writing: Theories and Methods ENGL 3570 – Introduction to Linguistics ENGL 4510 – Modern English Grammar and Usage ENGL 4520 – The Structure of English ENGL 4530 – History of the English Language	6 credits
Students will take 1 of the following communication studies courses	COMM 3580 – Political Communication COMM 3810 – Topics in Culture and Social Influence COMM 4100 – Rhetoric, Identity, and Difference COMM 4320 – Persuasion COMM 4650 – History and Theory of Rhetoric	3 credits
<b>Other Electives</b>	In addition to PWR, ENGL, and COMM, other recommended electives will include courses from JOUR, WGST, and IAM	<b>25 – 28 credits</b>
<b>Minor</b>		<b>15 – 18 credits</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>120 credits</b>

\*Experiential learning



### *Current Courses and Existing Programs*

List current courses and existing institutional programs which will give strength to the proposed program.

All of the ENGL and COMM courses listed in the table above already exist and are offered regularly at MTSU.

### *New Courses Needed*

List any new courses which must be added to initiate the program; include a catalog description for each of these courses.

- **PWR 3000 – Public Writing and Rhetoric (3 credits):** An interdisciplinary introduction to the study and practice of writing for public audiences. Students will analyze and produce writing meant for audiences beyond traditional academic settings. Prerequisite for other PWR courses.
- **PWR 3010 – Community Writing (3 credits):** The ethical, practical, and collaborative work involved in writing with and for community partners, including nonprofits, educational organizations, and advocacy groups. Building on collaborations with community partners, students will study and produce genres of writing relevant to such work.
- **PWR 3020 – Digital Writing (3 credits):** Theoretical and practical overview of how digital technologies are affecting the ways people write. Students will both study and produce projects made using writing-intensive digital platforms and media.
- **PWR 3030 – Cultural Rhetorics (3 credits):** The study and practice of how writing functions rhetorically across cultures, including the histories and theories of a variety of rhetorical traditions and practices.
- **PWR 4000 – Experimental Writing (3 credits):** An intensively collaborative production-oriented course in which students create experimental writing projects using an array of styles, technologies, and genres.
- **PWR 4999 – Writing Your Future (3 credits):** A capstone course that emphasizes the postgraduate public and professional applications of what students have learned in PWR. Includes the creation of a public-/employer-facing capstone portfolio.

### *Distance Learning*

Indicate whether this program will be offered via distance learning and which courses are available via distance learning.

This degree is not being proposed as an online program. However, some PWR courses may be offered online depending on student demand, and many courses that will be integrated into the degree already are.

### *Course Syllabi*

Syllabi for existing courses are provided in Appendix F.

### **Academic Standards**

The admission, retention and graduation standards should be clearly stated, be compatible with institutional or governing board policy, and encourage high quality.

All Public Writing and Rhetoric majors must meet the established admission, retention, and graduation requirements of the university. There are no other specific or unique admission, retention, or graduation requirements beyond those of the university.

Requirements for admission can be found at <http://catalog.mtsu.edu/content.php?catoid=30&navoid=6578>.

Policies governing academic performance requirements and retention standards can be found at <http://catalog.mtsu.edu/content.php?catoid=30&navoid=6525>.

Undergraduate degree requirements can be found at <http://catalog.mtsu.edu/index.php?catoid=30>.

### **Equity**

Provide information regarding how the proposed program will serve a diverse population of students (e.g., adult learners, students working and unable to relocate, students with preference for various delivery modes) or an underserved, historically underrepresented population of students or international students.

The interdisciplinary nature of this program will attract students who are interested in the civic, professional, and creative aspects of writing. The proposed major will balance a robust academic curriculum with attention to the writing and rhetorical skills necessary in relevant professional and technical fields. This balance will provide opportunities for traditional full-time college students as well as adult learners and part-time working students as well interested in employment or advancement in writing-intensive fields and positions. The faculty at the core of the major are also committed to inclusive pedagogical practices that are welcoming and accessible to students with disabilities, students of color, and LGBTQ+ students. Additionally, PWR faculty and the program director will

- develop and promote a programmatic mission that incorporates matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion,
- invite a range of voices, including underrepresented students and community partners, to advise faculty on outreach and curricular decisions,
- reach out to student organizations and university programs that serve and consist of underrepresented students and develop ongoing relationships with such organizations and programs (e.g., the June Anderson Center, MT Lambda, the Daniels Center, FUTURO, the Black Student Union),
- develop programmatic policies focused on equity and inclusion rather than only implementing such policies on a case-by-case, course-by-course basis, and
- make space for alternative literacies in PWR courses.

### **Program Enrollment and Graduates**

Provide the projected number of declared majors and graduates expected over the first three years (associate and certificate), 5 years (baccalaureate and master's programs) or 7 years (doctoral programs).

We assume a Fall 2022 start for the program and conservative enrollment estimates. Estimates are extrapolated from figures from similar programs in other regions included in Giberson, Nugent, and Ostergaard’s *Writing Majors: Eighteen Program Profiles*.

Full-time enrollment is figured at 12 credits per semester and part-time enrollment is figured at 6 credits per semester with enrollment in fall and spring terms, although many students will also enroll during summers. (Sample programs of study for full-time and part-time students are included as Appendix G). The projected attrition rate is 10%.

<b>Projected Enrollments and Graduates</b>			
<b>Year</b>	<b>Projected Total Year Headcount</b>	<b>Projected Attrition</b>	<b>Projected Graduates</b>
<b>1</b>	15	1	0
<b>2</b>	25	1	0
<b>3</b>	35	1	4
<b>4</b>	45	1	8
<b>5</b>	55	2	12

**Administrative Structure**

Provide the administrative unit and program director that will be responsible to ensure success of the proposed program.

The Public Writing and Rhetoric program will be an interdisciplinary program that includes faculty from across the College of Liberal Arts (CLA). It will be housed in CLA and report directly to that college’s dean. A current faculty member (Eric Detweiler) will serve as program director with supplementary assistance from administrative staff in the Department of English. Faculty will remain part of their home departments and colleges while teaching courses in the program. Instructional assignments will be developed in coordination with faculty members’ home departments and will be part of their regular instructional workload.

*Public Writing and Rhetoric Coordinating Committee*

Primary responsibility for the degree’s curriculum will lie with the Public Writing and Rhetoric Coordinating Committee. In collaboration with the CLA dean, the committee will be responsible for selecting and appointing participating faculty members and for ensuring the coherence of and adherence to the degree’s curriculum. The program director of the degree program will serve as chair of this committee, which will consist of faculty with backgrounds in rhetoric and writing. This arrangement is modeled on the administrative structure of other successful interdisciplinary programs at MTSU (e.g., data science, computational science, math and science education).

**Faculty Resources**

Current and/or anticipated faculty resources should ensure a program of high quality. The number and qualification of faculty should meet existing institutional standards and should be consistent with external standards, where appropriate. The adequacy of the number of faculty should be paramount in the planning process as institutions build increasing numbers of

interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary academic programs. The student/faculty ratio for the proposed program should be included in the documentation.

*Current Faculty*

List the name, rank, highest degree, primary department and estimate of the level of involvement of all current faculty members who will participate in the program. If the proposed program is at the graduate level, designate current graduate faculty status in relation to eligibility to chair thesis and/or dissertation. Attach a three-page vita for each faculty member listed including relevant related activities for the past five years (Appendix H).

<b>Name</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Highest Degree</b>	<b>Primary Dept.</b>	<b>Level of Involvement</b>
Eric Detweiler	Assistant Professor	PhD – The University of Texas at Austin	English	60%
Erica Stone	Assistant Professor	PhD – Texas Tech University	English	30%
Kate Pantelides	Associate Professor	PhD – University of South Florida	English	20%
Julie Myatt	Professor	PhD – University of Louisville	English	10%
Erica Cirillo- McCarthy	Assistant Professor	PhD – University of Arizona	English	10%
Stephen Severn	Professor	PhD – University of Maryland	English (Department Chair)	10%
Ron Kates	Professor	PhD – Georgia State University	Communication Studies (Interim Chair)	10%
Fred Arroyo	Assistant Professor	PhD – University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee	English	10%
Roberta Chevrette	Assistant Professor	PhD – Arizona State University	Communication Studies	10%
Patrick Richey	Associate Professor	PhD – University of Southern Mississippi	Communication Studies	10%

*Anticipated Faculty*

Describe the additional faculty needed during the next five years for the initiation of the program and list the anticipated schedule for addition of these faculty members.

We do not anticipate needing to hire additional faculty. In the longer term, additional faculty necessary to cover the growing major will be secured through existing hires in established departments.

## **Library and Information Technology Resources**

Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate current and/or anticipated library and information technology resources to support a high quality program which meets recognized standards for study at a particular level or in a particular field.

Faculty who will teach in the program make use of existing library resources, including MTSU's makerspace, digital databases, and physical catalog. Databases such as Taylor & Francis, JSTOR, and Project Muse supply extensive materials for use by Public Writing and Rhetoric faculty and students.

### *Library and Information Technology Acquisitions Needed*

Given existing library and IT resources, we do not anticipate needed to acquire new resources to support this program.

## **Support Resources**

Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate other existing and/or anticipated support resources including clear statements of support staff, student advising resources, arrangement for clinical or other affiliations, and professional development for faculty necessary for a successful program.

### *Evidence of Willingness to Partner*

Include government, education, health and business entities.

The letters of support in Appendix D indicate a wide range of support and possible partnerships across MTSU's campus and with employers and organizations across the region. Multiple letter writers have specifically asked for follow-up correspondence once the degree is up and running so that they can coordinate with the program on internship and employment opportunities.

Should the degree program be approved, the faculty also plan to develop a community advisory board of external stakeholders, including relevant business and community leaders, who will partner with the program to provide guidance and partnership possibilities as the program grows and begins graduating students.

### *Other Support Currently Available*

Include support staff, university and non-university assistance.

In consultation with department and college leadership, we have budgeted for a semesterly course reassignment for the program director to carry out administrative duties.

In addition to the program director, the program will be supported by these existing campus resources:

- Full-time CLA advisors: Dedicated advisors in MTSU's College of Liberal Arts. Will be provided with materials outlining potential curricular pathways, specializations, and interdisciplinary coursework for PWR majors (see Appendix J).

- Faculty advisors in the Department of English: Dedicated advisors, including PWR-affiliated faculty, who are also full-time faculty members. Will guide students through courses in their major. Will be provided with materials outlining potential curricular pathways, specializations, and interdisciplinary coursework for PWR majors (see Appendix J).
- Department of English administrative staff: Three secretaries who assist students and faculty with matters related to budget, curriculum, registration, and other programmatic concerns.
- Department of English's Professional Development Coordinator: Coordinates internship and professionalization opportunities for English majors and graduate students. Will be a key collaborator in developing experiential learning opportunities for PWR majors.
- University Writing Center: Supports students in developing responsible, informed writing practices through collaborative tutoring sessions.
- Campus Tutoring: Offers tutoring to students across a range of courses and academic subjects.
- CLA Internship Coordinator: Develops and maintains relevant internship opportunities for students across MTSU's College of Liberal Arts. Will be a key collaborator in developing experiential learning opportunities for PWR majors.
- Career Development Center: University center that connects students to resources, people and experiences for a successful transition from college.

#### *Other Support Needed*

List additional staff and other assistance needed during the first three years (associate and certificate), 5 years (baccalaureate and master's programs) or 7 years (doctoral programs).

We anticipate needing no additional professional support for this program.

### **Facilities and Equipment**

Provide documentation to demonstrate adequate existing and/or anticipated facilities and equipment. New/or renovated facilities required to implement the program should be clearly outlined by amount and type of space, costs identified and source of funds to cover costs.

#### *Existing Facilities and Equipment*

Assess the adequacy of the existing physical facilities and equipment available to the proposed program. Include special classrooms, laboratories, physical equipment, computer facilities, etc.

Existing classroom space is adequate to implement the proposed program, and the program director already possesses office space.

#### *Additional Facilities and Equipment Required or Anticipated*

Describe physical facilities and equipment that will be required/anticipated during the first three years (associate or certificate programs), 5 years (undergraduate and master's programs) or 7 years (doctoral programs).

No additional spaces or renovations are needed.

### **Marketing and Recruitment Plan**

Provide a plan, including marketing and recruitment, to ensure all prospective students will

have equitable access to the program so as not to impede the state's commitment to diversity and access in higher education. Identify any budget implications in the THEC Financial Projection Form.

The Public Writing and Rhetoric program will be implemented in Fall 2022 and will be subject to post-approval monitoring for the first five years of operation. The university's assessment of program viability (the basis for the decision to seek approval to implement a new degree) is based upon a projection of enrollment sufficient to offset program costs. With these targets and the requirements of the post-approval monitoring process in mind, it is critical that MTSU develop and carryout a comprehensive strategic plan for recruitment of students to this major. Our strategic recruitment plan for the B.S. in Public Writing and Rhetoric is included as Appendix I.

### **Assessment and Evaluation**

Although the primary responsibility for program quality rests with the institution and its institutional governing board or its system, THEC considers pertinent information to verify that high standards have been established for the operation and evaluation of the programs. Evidence must be proposed to demonstrate that careful evaluation is undertaken periodically throughout the lifetime of the program indicating: **The schedule for program assessments or evaluations, (including program evaluations associated with Quality Assurance, institutional program review, student evaluations, faculty review, accreditation, and employer evaluation).**

The Public Writing and Rhetoric major will conduct regular scheduled external reviews of this program in accordance with MTSU and THEC policies. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness, Planning, and Research is responsible for overseeing external program reviews. The program will also use formative and summative evaluation based on exit surveys of program graduates, reviews of student course evaluations, reviews of student coursework, and other relevant factors. Additional assessment and evaluation measures will include:

- The work of the Public Writing and Rhetoric Coordinating Committee described above.
- Collaboration with a community advisory board, also described above, consisting of relevant business and other community leaders.
- Tracking the placement of graduating students and alumni in appropriate professional settings, including relevant graduate programs.

The program director will be responsible for conducting programing assessments and evaluations relevant to accreditation.

### **Accreditation**

Where appropriate, professional disciplinary accreditation organizations should be identified. The proposed accreditation timeline must be submitted. Any substantive change that may requires a SACS-COC review should be indicated.

The university is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The implementation of this major does not comprise a substantive change requiring SACSCOC review.

**Funding**

A budget narrative that complements the budget projections on the THEC Financial Projection Form should be included. The narrative must address the institution's capacity to deliver the proposed program within existing and projected resources including an explanation of the current departmental budget in which the proposed program will be housed and estimated additional costs for the first three years (associate degrees, five years (undergraduate and master's degrees), or seven years (doctoral degrees) for the proposed program. Please note that these costs for each year are incremental costs not cumulative costs.

The THEC Financial Projection form, which includes necessary funding information, is included as Appendix A. As noted in that form, key line items for the program include salary costs to offset course releases for the program director, travel costs for the program director, printing costs for promotional materials related to the program, and other operating costs related to marketing and equipment for the major. Costs are readily offset by projected tuition revenue.



## Appendices

## Appendix A

### Tennessee Higher Education Commission Appendix A: THEC Financial Projections Form Middle Tennessee State University B.S. in Public Writing and Rhetoric

Seven-year projections are required for doctoral programs.  
Five-year projections are required for baccalaureate and Master's degree programs  
Three-year projections are required for associate degrees and undergraduate certificates.  
Projections should include cost of living increases per year.  
Planning year projections are not required but should be included when appropriate.

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>I. Expenditures</b>						
<b>A. One-time Expenditures</b>						
New/Renovated Space <sup>1</sup>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Library	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Consultants	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Sub-Total One-time</b>	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>B. Recurring Expenditures</b>						
<b>Personnel</b>						
<b>Administration</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Sub-Total Administration</b>	\$ -	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800	\$ 4,800
<b>Faculty</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Sub-Total Faculty</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Support Staff</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Sub-Total Support Staff</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Graduate Assistants</b>						
Salary	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Tuition and Fees* (See Below)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Sub-Total Graduate Assistants</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Operating</b>						
Travel	\$ -	\$ 2,500	\$ 2,575	\$ 2,652	\$ 2,732	\$ 2,814
Printing	\$ -	\$ 500	\$ 515	\$ 530	\$ 546	\$ 563
Equipment	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ 8,000	\$ 5,150	\$ 5,305	\$ 5,464	\$ 5,628
<b>Sub-Total Operating</b>	\$ -	\$ 11,000	\$ 8,240	\$ 8,487	\$ 8,742	\$ 9,004
<b>Total Recurring</b>	\$ -	\$ 15,800	\$ 13,040	\$ 13,287	\$ 13,542	\$ 13,804
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B)</b>	\$ 1,500	\$ 15,800	\$ 13,040	\$ 13,287	\$ 13,542	\$ 13,804

**\*If tuition and fees for Graduate Assistants are included, please provide the following information.**

Base Tuition and Fees Rate	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Number of Graduate Assistants	-	-	-	-	-	-

**II. Revenue**

Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	
Tuition and Fees <sup>2</sup>	\$ -	\$ 116,380	\$ 207,080	\$ 297,780	\$ 388,480	\$ 479,180
Institutional Reallocations <sup>3</sup>	\$ 1,500	\$ (100,580)	\$ (194,040)	\$ (284,493)	\$ (374,938)	\$ (465,376)
Federal Grants <sup>4</sup>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Private Grants or Gifts <sup>5</sup>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other <sup>6</sup>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>BALANCED BUDGET LINE</b>	<b>\$ 1,500</b>	<b>\$ 15,800</b>	<b>\$ 13,040</b>	<b>\$ 13,287</b>	<b>\$ 13,542</b>	<b>\$ 13,804</b>

**Notes:**

**(1) Provide the funding source(s) for the new or renovated space.**

N/A

**(2) In what year is tuition and fee revenue expected to be generated? Tuition and fees include maintenance fees, out-of-state tuition, and any applicable earmarked fees for the program. Explain any differential fees.**

Tuition revenue will be generated beginning in Year 1 and is calculated conservatively without increases in future years.  
 Year 1: (10 full-time students @ \$9,070 = \$90,700) + ( 5 part-time students @ \$2,568 = \$25,680) = \$116,380.  
 Year 2: (20 full-time students @ \$9,070 = \$181,400) + ( 5 part-time students @ \$2,568 = \$25,680) = \$207,080.  
 Year 3: (30 full-time students @ \$9,070 = \$272,100) + ( 5 part-time students @ \$2,568 = \$25,680) = \$297,780.  
 Year 4: (40 full-time students @ \$9,070 = \$362,800) + ( 5 part-time students @ \$2,568 = \$25,680) = \$388,480.  
 Year 5: (50 full-time students @ \$9,070 = \$453,500) + ( 5 part-time students @ \$2,568 = \$25,680) = \$479,180.

**(3) Identify the source(s) of the institutional reallocations, and grant matching requirements if applicable.**

N/A

**(4) Provide the source(s) of the Federal Grant including the granting department and CFDA(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) numb**

N/A

**(5) Provide the name of the organization(s) or individual(s) providing grant(s) or gift(s).**

N/A

**(6) Provide information regarding other sources of the funding.**

N/A



Feasibility Study for a  
**PUBLIC WRITING AND RHETORIC**  
Bachelor's Degree at MTSU



JONES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS  
*Business and Economic Research Center*

We evaluate the feasibility of offering a bachelor of science degree in Public Writing and Rhetoric at MTSU. We look at student demand to enter such a program, and then at the employment prospects for those holding this degree. An intent of the program is to provide students with written communication skills desired by employers. It has been structured to facilitate students wishing to use it as a double major alongside a second substantive major to increase their attractiveness to employers. We will thus include this intent in our analysis.

## Student Enrollment

Nationally, the number of academic writing programs has slowly expanded over the past decade. In 2018, there were 346 colleges or universities across the U.S. that offered writing concentrations or degrees.<sup>1</sup> This is a third higher than at the start of the decade. Six Tennessee schools, all private, graduate a handful of students from their writing programs. However none of them has a major in this area. (The students they graduate are generally English majors with a concentration in writing or a similar focus.) No Tennessee public institution has an undergraduate major focused upon writing skills.<sup>2</sup>

The number of national graduates in writing programs has remained stable in recent years. As shown in Figure 2, Tennessee students have averaged in the mid-20s per academic year over the past decade.

## Projected Student Interest

The steady national enrollment in this field suggests likely interest should a Tennessee university offer a major in it. However we looked at three more detailed measures of interest: an MTSU student survey, the experience of the existing MTSU interdisciplinary writing minor, and the experience of the programs at other institutions that the developers of this program proposal explicitly identified as their models.

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<sup>1</sup>All data on educational programs, degrees, or graduates come from IPEDS, the Integrated Post secondary Education Data System, <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>. Writing programs are identified under four CIP codes.

- 23.1301: Writing
- 23.1302: Creative Writing
- 23.1303: Technical and Business Writing
- 23.1304: Rhetoric and Composition.

Most institutions utilize one cip code, but several have programs under multiple cip codes.

<sup>2</sup>THEC identifies one program at ETSU as being in this area (<http://thec.ppr.tn.gov/APISearch/APISearch.aspx>). East Tennessee State University's Speech program is listed under 23.1304 "Rhetoric and Composition." However, that major has no writing component and is almost certainly misclassified. See <https://www.etsu.edu/opa/factbooks/Fact Book 2012 PDF/Section 07 Degrees Conferred/7.05 Degrees Conferred By Major Programs of Study By College By Department.pdf>. This is not unusual. We quickly identified three very large Communications majors (George Mason, Old Dominion, and West Chester University) that also using the 23.1304 cip code. We did not attempt to ascertain how many other institutions were doing the same. However it is clear that a substantial number of diplomas under 23.1304 are not from writing programs and for that reason we have omitted data associated with this cip code from our analysis.

Figure 1: Growth in Writing Programs Since 2010/2011

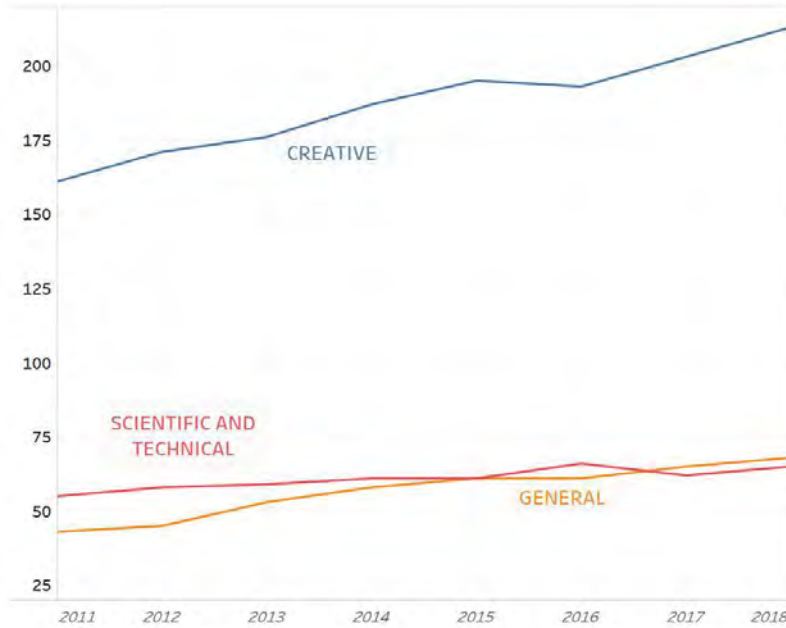
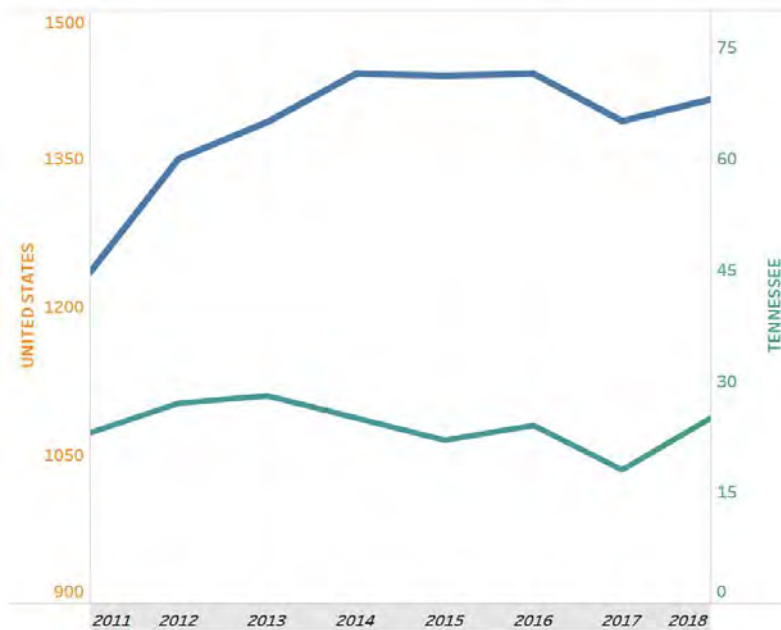
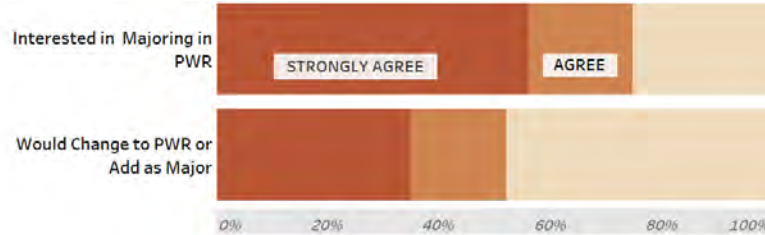


Figure 2: Trend in Undergraduate Diplomas Awarded in Writing Programs, 2010/2011



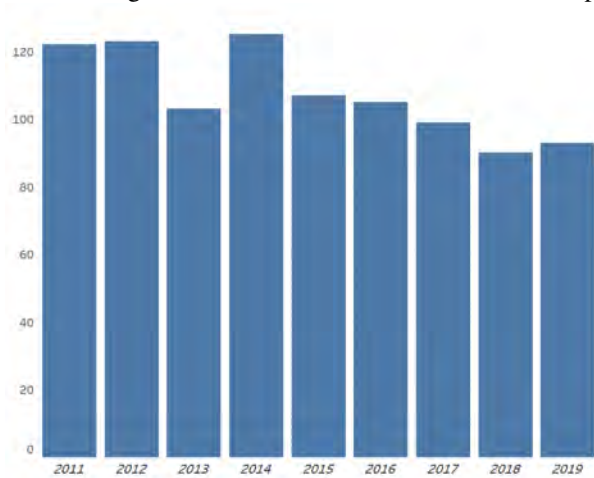
Degrees awarded in general writing and in scientific and technical writing. Degrees in creative writing are not included.

Figure 3: MTSU Student Survey Results



n = 75

Figure 4: Enrollment in the MTSU Interdisciplinary Writing Minor



### Student Survey

A survey was administered to students in MTSU writing-intensive courses in Spring 2019. Depending upon their situation, students were asked if they would choose to major in Public Writing and Rhetoric, if it were available, and/or if they would change their major or add it as a second major, if it were available. To both questions, the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would. (See Figure 3.)

If we project this survey across all intensive writing courses on campus, the number of expected majors would be substantial.

### Interdisciplinary Writing Minors

MTSU has an existing minor in writing. As seen in Figure 4, it is quite sizable, averaging around one hundred students in recent years. Beyond evidencing the size of student interest in writing, it is credible to expect that a substantial minority would opt for Public Writing and Rhetoric as a second major if they could do so.

Table 1: Diplomas Awarded in 2018 by Peer Programs

Institution	Bachelors Program	Degrees Awarded	Normed to MTSU
St. Edward's University	Writing and Rhetoric	17	87
U. of Central Arkansas	Writing	23	49
Texas Christian U.	Writing	17	41
Oakland U.	Writing and Rhetoric	30	37
U. of Texas/Austin	Rhetoric and Writing	63	33
U. of Kentucky***	Writing, Rhetoric, and Digital Studies	12	12
DePaul U.	Writing, Rhetoric, and Discourse	6	8

\*\*\* The University of Kentucky program began in 2014-15.

### Experience of Peer Programs

The proposal for the Public Writing and Rhetoric major references similar programs at peer institutions. We can look at the success of the programs in attracting students. Table 1 lists the cited institutions and the number of their 2018 diplomas awarded. The third column norms the diplomas awarded as if the institution had the same sized undergraduate student body as MTSU. Sized to MTSU, the average number of degrees is in the mid-30s. Obviously this disguises substantial variation. But only one institution that has had a program for any length of time (DePaul) awards relatively few degrees.

These independent indicators of likely majors point in the same direction. An MTSU program in this field would be expected to graduate thirty students or more in a given academic year.

## Employment Opportunities

The Public Writing and Rhetoric major presents two pathways to employment opportunities following graduation. The first is to seek employment directly as a writer. The Bureau of Labor Statistics associates writing degrees with careers as an editor, as a technical writer, as a copy editor, or as a general “writer and author.”<sup>3</sup> The second pathway is to add the degree as a second major alongside another substantive major from which the student is primarily seeking employment. In this latter case, the writing major would be used to enhance the skill set desired by employers and so increase the student’s employability. We look at each possibility.

### Employment as a Writer

In 2017, businesses in Tennessee employed 5,352 individuals as writers.<sup>4</sup> That number has not changed significantly over the past decade. The State’s Department of Labor

<sup>3</sup>These are SOC codes 27-3041, 27-3042, and 27-3043. School teaching in English is also considered an associated occupation but it is not considered here since it is not an aim of the major.

<sup>4</sup>Source: JobsEQ database.



and Workforce Development believes that employment will remain stable in these occupations over the next ten years, with technical writing alone being identified as likely to grow significantly.<sup>5</sup> Annual new employment is expected to be around 510 jobs per year, mostly the result of retirements or other job separations. Currently there is a “supply surplus,” in other words more job seekers than jobs advertised.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, even if we include degrees in creative writing, the annual number of graduates from Tennessee colleges and universities in these fields falls far short of 510. In 2018, 99 students took diplomas in some form of writing from all state institutions combined. The question is the competitiveness of an individual with a writing diploma compared to a job applicant without one. We suspect that the supply surplus is the result of individuals from other backgrounds seeking these positions given that employers seeking writers seldom specify a field of study in their job ads.<sup>7</sup> (As a rule they do demand a bachelor’s degree, however.) We have to believe that a diploma that is directly related to the job description would make a candidate relatively competitive. Since the annual position openings are five times the number of the annual new degrees awarded, we would expect the graduates of an MTSU Public Writing and Rhetoric program would be well situated to obtain one of these positions should they desire one. But we must also concede that the data does not allow us to empirically confirm this presumed increased competitiveness.

### **Employment in a Field Where Writing is a Valued Skill**

The expectation is that many or most Public Writing and Rhetoric graduates would not seek employment as a writer. Rather, they would be double majors who would use the writing major to bolster their credentials for employment in another field. The belief is that writing is a valued skill and that the demonstration of the possession of this skill will strengthen a job candidate’s competitiveness.

It is rather difficult to directly test this assumption. What we can do is determine the importance that employers place on writing skills in their job advertisements and in their communications with employment agencies. Nationally, for the month of October 2019, about forty-five percent of all job advertisements included the desire that the applicant have “verbal or written communication skills.” This compares to the six percent asking for knowledge of Microsoft Office, for example.<sup>8</sup>

The State of Tennessee’s Department of Labor and Workforce Development website (jobs4tn.gov) reports the results of a national employer survey of the most commonly desired “work abilities” for each major occupation. Each work ability is scored from zero to 100 for its importance to the occupation. A work ability scoring sixty is considered “important” for that occupation while seventy is considered “very important.” There are forty-four distinct work abilities evaluated. Two involve writing: “Written Expression” and “Written Comprehension.” We can examine the importance of these two abilities for any occupation as well as see where they rank among the

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<sup>5</sup>All Tennessee workforce data is from job4tn.gov, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s website.

<sup>6</sup>Note that nationally this is not true, the supply of jobs slightly exceeds the number of job searchers.

<sup>7</sup>It is not possible to see applicant resumes to confirm this, obviously.

<sup>8</sup>Data for jobs posted on O\*Net during October, 2019 from JobsEQ.

Figure 5: Occupations and Desired Work Abilities

<i>SOC</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Written Expression</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Written Comprehension</i>	<i>Rank</i>
29-1141	RNs	69	11	75	6
11-1021	General and Operations Managers	75	6	75	5
15-1131	Computer Programmers	56	10	75	1
15-1151	Computer Use Support Managers	66	10	75	3
13-2011	Auditors	75	5	72	10
	Accountants	75	2	69	11
29-1127	Speech Language Pathologists	75	6	72	10
11-2022	Sales Managers	72	7	75	3

from jobs4tn.gov

forty-four abilities. Aggregating all occupations into one number is impossible, and the number of occupations is too large to examine each separately. Instead, in Figure 5, we show the occupations in Tennessee with the largest employments among all those that require a bachelor’s degree.<sup>9</sup>

Employers consider writing among the most important skills they seek. It is consistently in the top ten of the work abilities that are ranked. It generally exceeds seventy, the threshold of an ability considered very important. The occupations are illustrative, but the consistency is apparent. Evidence of training in writing skills will strengthen the portfolio and competitiveness of job applicants. Unfortunately we cannot attach any firm number to the degree of strengthening or give a number for the number of applicants that will find work because of their skill in writing. However, unless employers do not mean what they say, their own evaluations of their needs indicate that a Public Writing and Rhetoric degree will appreciably improve the job prospects of its possessor.

## Conclusion

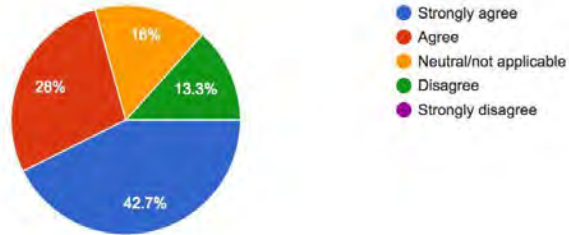
National and peer institution data, a survey of MTSU student interest, and the health of the existing MTSU writing major all indicate that an MTSU B.S. in Public Writing and Rhetoric would draw a significant number of students. Based on this data, we would anticipate the program to attract over 100 majors, more likely more than 120. The data on employment success is softer since there is no single identified employment path. However employer survey data shows that the skills inculcated in a writing program are quite desired. There is also evidence that employment opportunities are available in occupations directly classified as writing. Therefore we believe that graduates, particularly those with double majors, will be strong candidates on the job market.

<sup>9</sup>There are two exceptions. We excluded school teachers. And because several categories of nurses are among the largest SOC codes, we have used only the largest, Registered Nurses.

## Appendix C

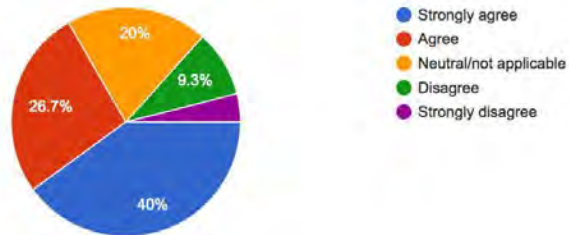
I would be more likely to enroll in a major with core courses focused on writing than in a major with core courses focused on literature.

75 responses



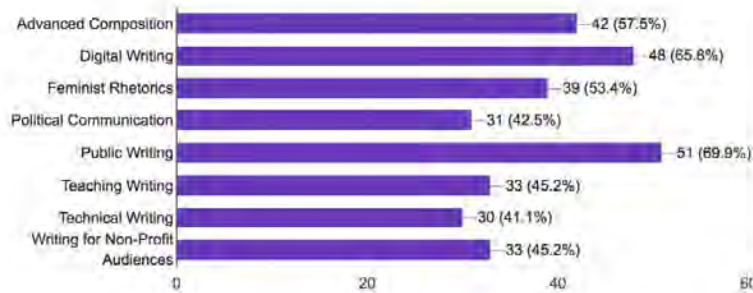
If MTSU had a master's degree in writing, I would be interested in pursuing that degree.

75 responses



If they were offered as part of this major, I would be interested in taking the following courses:

73 responses



If you are an English major, English minor, or writing minor, what are your professional goals after graduation? This can include fields you hope to work in and/or advanced degrees you hope to pursue.

- Social media work, copywriting/content writing, grant writing, publishing
- I am interested in a masters degree program.
- I hope to work in the publishing/editing industry after graduation
- I hope to help better my community by working for a nonprofit organization.
- Teaching, possibly pursuing my master's
- My primary purpose in pursuing an English major with a concentration in writing is to become a better novelist. Unfortunately, there are no classes at MTSU directly tasked with instructing students on how to write a novel worthy of being published. There is a nice creative writing class, but short stories, plays, and poetry are very different from novels. Like most unpublished novelists, I will be pursuing a career to support myself financially while I write my novel. This career will most likely be in publishing or editing. Because I have an extensive background in wildlife conservation work, I will first try to get work writing for conservation efforts (such as The Tennessee Conservationist, The Tennessee Environmental Council, or The Tennessee Naturalist Program.)
- Editing, publishing and writing novels
- Librarianship; plans to get a MLIS
- Law school
- Editing or Publishing
- Author, screenwriting
- Publishing industry; masters in English lit or Linguistics

- I am a music business major, so the primary goal of my writing minor is to help me better communicate with fellow employees, potential clients, and public audiences in that sector
- I am hoping to write scripts for television and movie entertainment.
- screenwriting/script writing
- I hope to establish myself in some facet of the music industry or pursue a graduate degree.
- My professional goals are to find a writing job after graduation and work that job for a year or two before going on to get my master's degree.
- Fiction writing
- I am majoring in Video and Film Production, with a minor in writing. My goal is to become a professional Filmmaker.
- Teach secondary English. Eventually complete masters in Literacy.
- I want to be an author or an editor.
- I want to go into publishing and work for somewhere like Penguin, or persue a master's/other graduate level degree in library science and management.
- Working for a major publication as a writer or editor.
- Author
- I want to write grants for non-profits and laboratories. I still plan to graduate with a major in Biochemistry, but I wouldn't hesitate to double major with an added professional communications degree. My primary interests are within the fields of environmental science and public health, but I communicate better through text than speech.
- I am not an English major, but I am a Communication Studies Major with an emphasis on Rhetoric. I plan to pursue an advanced degree in either writing or public speaking and eventually become a professor.
- I'm interested in writing short stories (being published) and blogs for web sites.
- Developmental/Line Editor
- Teaching and translating.
- Screenwriter, Creative Writing Professor, Magazine Editor
- I want to become a technical writer for the military. I am also interested in more creative and/or analytical writing as well. I am wanting to pursue a graduate degree as well once I graduate from MTSU.
- Digital media
- To write for animation
- I am pursuing a JD in order to work in social justice law.
- N/a
- I would like to start my own print or online publication in addition to freelance writing and potentially teaching English abroad.
- Technical Writing, Screenwriting, Teaching English Abroad
- To get a teaching position teaching reading or language arts
- An actress.
- Editing for either a publishing company or in general
- I am unsure anymore as to if I should do ESL education due to the Praxis exams, but if I decide to do that again, I would pursue my master's in ESL. Otherwise I'm gonna do what I can with my major such as marketing, writing for nonprofits, maybe coding? The thing about the English Major is that employers view it as someone that is flexible and

... moldable... sometimes. I would also try and get a poetry book published. I really love writing, so now I wonder if I can double minor? not sure.

- Novelist/Literary critic/Philosopher
- Teach high school English courses
- Environmental Law and the Governmental Agency work
- I want to be a Young Adult fantasy author and I am studying to become an high school english teacher.
- I hope to write screenplays and books
- Editor
- To write short fiction and novels if possible based on my experience with people who have problems and maybe spiritual novels.
- Screenwriting or digital writing
- I want to teach.
- I am going to apply for jobs as a high school English teacher. (English/Secondary Education Major)
- N/A
- I want to work in publishing. I'm thinking about getting an MFA, but I don't want to move away from home. If a masters program was at Mtsu, I would 100% do it
- Teach either History or English and pursue a graduate degree in Library Sciences
- I hope to work in multimedia editing or scientific audience writing for major research companies, I am still narrowing down my options.
- Teaching at the collegiate level
- My professional goal after graduation is to be a writer.

## Appendix D

OFFICE OF THE  
**FEDERAL PUBLIC  
DEFENDER  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF  
TENNESSEE**

**HENRY A. MARTIN  
FEDERAL PUBLIC DEFENDER**

810 BROADWAY, SUITE 200  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37203-3805  
TELEPHONE: 615-736-5047  
FAX: 615-736-5265

August 1, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been an attorney for approximately 12 years. For eight of those years, I held the position of Research & Writing Specialist at the office of the Federal Public Defender. For two years during law school I acted as a Teaching Assistant for my legal-writing professor, attempting to teach legal-writing principles to law students. For *all* of my time as an attorney, I have been first and foremost a writer, even now in my role as a trial lawyer. Writing is the single most important skill in this industry.

I understand that MTSU is considering developing a program in Public Writing and Rhetoric. I do not claim to understand the many reasons an academic institution might have for taking or not taking such an action. But what I do know is that more and more students are entering law school—and ultimately entering the legal profession—with minimal writing skills. This fact prejudices our clients and harms the profession as a whole. We hire a group of law-school interns every summer, and I have taken it upon myself to teach a short writing program every summer. Based on this experience, I know that good writing is hard to teach. I strongly support any effort by academia to study and standardize the practice. I believe that the Public Writing and Rhetoric program would represent an important step toward that goal.

Sincerely yours,

*s/ Andrew C. Brandon*

ANDREW C. BRANDON

Assistant Federal Public Defender



July 7, 2020

Professor Eric Detweiler [Eric.Detweiler@mtsu.edu](mailto:Eric.Detweiler@mtsu.edu) [rhetoric.org/](http://rhetoric.org/)

Dear Professor Detweiler,

We were delighted to learn that MTSU is considering creating a PWR program. Excellent writing skills are the key to success in the business world as you know. And, most unfortunately, it is getting more challenging to find recent graduates who have mediocre skills, to saying nothing of exceptional.

Please keep us abreast of the developments of the new program. As a local business with a national reach, we are quite supportive of this newest development at MTSU!

Best,

A photograph of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored, textured paper. The signature reads "Julie Schoerke" in a cursive script, followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Julie Schoerke  
FounderJKS Communications Books Forward  
Books Fluent [julie@booksforward.com](mailto:julie@booksforward.com)





7-4-2020

Department of English  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Box 70  
1301 E. Main St.  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Dear Dr. Stephen Severn:

Dr. Severn, my name is Mark Jones I 'm the CEO/ Founder of Life Is Brewing, we currently work with the MTSU Fermentation program housing their Lab classes at Hop Springs.

I not only see the importance of the Bachelor of Science in Public writing and Rhetoric but its necessity to clearly put thoughts on paper then ultimately into use. The problem I am experiencing with Graduates is the lack of focus. Focus comes from a well laid out plan. A well laid out plan must be written to be able to follow, instruct and sell the idea to investors.

In todays market you have about 3 minutes of critical time from potential key holders, Investors, Teachers, Politicians before you are tuned out. This degree is the fundamentals to that. Toughest class I took , for me, was Public Speaking at MTSU. But what it did was give me the confidence to get out there and speak. I learned thru personal trials and tribulation what those words should consist of.

In closing, this could be the key thing Millennials are missing that could close the generational gap.

Sincerely,

Mark Jones  
CEO Life Is Brewing  
Steel Barrel, Hop Springs, Mantra,



W • W • NORTON & COMPANY • NEW YORK • LONDON

Dr. Karen Petersen  
Dean, College of Liberal Arts  
Middle Tennessee State University  
1302 E. Main Street  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Dean Petersen:

As a lover of the written word, I'm pleased to hear of Middle Tennessee State University's new major in Public Writing and Rhetoric. The ability to write clearly, professionally, and effectively is a skill, I fear, may be lost in the current world of 140 characters and emojis. As a publisher representative, I understand how important this type of education will be to students looking toward any career, especially any career working with people. Whether communicating with customers, patients, clients, or collaborating with colleagues, the skills gained through a program such as PWR will be invaluable to the fledgling workforce.

While I cannot speak on behalf of W. W. Norton, Inc., I can say that as an independent and employee-owned company that employs people throughout the country, I will absolutely suggest that hiring managers look to some of the first graduates of MTSU's Public Writing and Rhetoric program.

Kind Regards,

Alicia Thompson  
2621 Ashwood Ave.  
Nashville, TN 37212  
C: 781.710.5602  
Senior Sales Representative-Nashville  
W. W. Norton, Inc.



W. W. NORTON & COMPANY  
INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS SINCE 1923



To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Andy Nelson, I am co-founder and Head Distiller at Nelson's Green Brier Distillery in Nashville, Tennessee. My brother and I re-started our great-great-great grandfather's company 100 years after Prohibition shut it down, and we have been working to grow the business since approximately 2006. Since then, we have successfully grown from a two person company to the point that we recently engaged in a strategic partnership with Constellation Brands, a large, publicly traded, beverage alcohol company. We are still running the business and plan on doing so for a long time to come, but our growth trajectory is now much greater than in years past.

I only mention this as a backdrop to why I am writing this letter. I recently learned about the potential for a Public Writing and Rhetoric degree at MTSU and I would like to voice my strong support for this program. My own educational background is in the Humanities with a specific concentration in philosophy from Loyola Marymount University. With this experience in addition to my business experience, I have come to appreciate the highly underappreciated skills that come from an educational background that this major will provide. I have found from personal experience that job candidates in the distilled spirits industry often lack greatly in the simple skills of interpersonal communication. I am a firm believer in the value of personal connection and I have learned that this can truly make all the difference between a good employee and a great one.

My sincere hope is that this degree program is created, as I believe it can provide a much needed extra dimension to the education of future distilling candidates. We at Nelson's Green Brier Distillery would absolutely benefit from the well-rounded graduates from such a program so I would like to voice my support for it. Thank you very much and I look forward to learning more about the progress of this degree.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy Nelson".

Andy Nelson  
Vice President; Head Distiller  
Nelson's Green Brier Distillery



**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

CREATE  
ENGAGE  
COMMUNICATE

To Whom It May Concern,

MP&F Strategic Communications is writing to voice its support for the new Bachelor of Science in public writing and rhetoric major that is currently in discussion to be developed at Middle Tennessee State University.

The world of public relations and strategic communication is ever-changing; but it's always been important for our employees to have a strong command of language, as it serves as the cornerstone of what we do at MP&F. Because of that, we seek entry-level employees and intern candidates who possess strong writing skills and also are familiar with other communications strategies we provide our clients – including media relations, digital and social media, advertising, marketing, strategic planning, and more.

Over the years, MP&F has had several MTSU graduates on our staff (including one of our current partners, Jennifer Brantley) and in our internship program. These employees have been great assets to our company and our clients. We know MTSU develops top communications professionals, and this new program sounds as though it would produce the types of individuals we would be interested in hiring at MP&F.

We look forward to following the development of this major

Sincerely,

Pam Schmidt  
Director of Human Resources and Talent Development  
MP&F Strategic Communications



## Department of State

Tennessee State Library and Archives  
403 Seventh Avenue North  
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312  
(615) 741-7996

Dr. Stephen Severn  
Department of English  
Middle Tennessee State University  
1301 E. Main St., Box 70  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

July 19, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

As an alumna and professional librarian, I am writing in strong support of the Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric major. My passion for improving literacy outcomes and access to books for individuals with disabilities has been impactful only to the extent to which I've able to effectively engage with others. Written and oral communication skills have been determining factors of efficacy in my efforts to secure jobs for myself, obtain funding for projects ranging up to \$200,000.00, and effectively lead a group of 12 full-time employees in my current role.

Specifically, these public-facing outcomes would not have come to fruition at my library without strong communication skills:

- Development of an Early Braille Literacy Engagement.
- Addition of an Audio Heritage Lab to the plans for the new Tennessee State Library and Archives building.
- Establishment of multiple new positions to strategically increase the impact of our work.
- Launch of an accessible story time program for children with disabilities.

Graduates of such a program as this new major would likely make standout job applicants and, ultimately, more impactful professionals.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Maria Sochor".

Maria Sochor, MIS

Director of the Tennessee Library for Accessible Books and Media



September 16, 2020

Dear Professor Stone,

As Middle Tennessee natives we are thrilled to hear MTSU is in the process of developing a PWR program. In our line of business, a well drafted cover letter or the perfect piece of content marketing can set the tone for a career or brand. Furthermore, as online presence is a huge part of our fashion & lifestyle company, writing in conjunction with UX design is critical for creating a streamlined digital experience for our customers.

Though we have much enthusiasm for operating a forward thinking and innovative company, the finesse of proper writing skills is often lost in our digital society. When we are searching for new talent to add to our team, candidates who share our passion for innovation while respecting traditional business practices are often our top picks. We believe keen writing skills will never go out of fashion and can give someone a competitive edge.

Please keep us informed on the progression of this program as its graduates would be of most interest for us for future roles at Mina & Vine.

Sincerely,

*Brittany S. Garman*

Brittany Garman  
Co-Founder / Chief Creative Officer  
Mina & Vine - *the only smart scarf*  
[www.minaandvine.com](http://www.minaandvine.com)  
[hello@minaandvine.com](mailto:hello@minaandvine.com)



9721 SHERRILL BLVD.  
KNOXVILLE, TN 37932

KELLY SMITH TRIMBLE  
SENIOR EDITORIAL DIRECTOR  
O/M 865-300-3070

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the creation of a Public Writing and Rhetoric Program in the English Department at Middle Tennessee State University.

I received my English degree just up the road from MTSU at Sewanee: The University of the South in 2000. My English degree, coupled with valuable internship experiences, gave me the writing and critical reading and thinking skills to immediately go into an editorial publishing career, at first in the magazine industry and now, 20 years later, in digital media at a global TV company. I am currently the Senior Editorial Director in Digital at Discovery (formerly Scripps Networks) in Knoxville, where I lead a team of 15+ editors and writers who manage the website content, social video, and newsletters for HGTV, DIY Network, and Travel Channel.

I believe my English degree, in many ways, prepared me better for this career than a Journalism, Marketing, or PR degree ever would have, which is why I fully support this new program being housed in the English department. When I graduated, however, the internet and associated digital media industry were only a glimmer on the horizon, and social media was barely a thought. The media landscape looks completely different now. Thankfully, I have learned so many skills on the job in the past 20 years that enable me to succeed in this new world, including understanding niche audiences, adjusting language per digital platform, working hand-in-hand with visual and UX designers, amplifying online content through programming strategies, and writing to boost search engine results.

Though I acquired this knowledge on the job, as a hiring manager in Digital, I expect students coming out of college now to already have these skills, or at least be familiar with them. Job candidates for entry level positions need to understand SEO, be familiar with digital content strategy, know a little about digital analytics, and understand that social media platforms are crucial *publishing* platforms for serving audiences and extending brands and messages — all while having solid writing and reading skills, of course.

I look forward to meeting some of the graduates of MTSU’s Public Writing and Rhetoric Program in a few years, and I would be happy to consider them as candidates for positions in Digital at Discovery. As quickly as things change in the media industry and as adept as this younger generation can be with new platforms, I fully expect one of them to be my boss someday.

Sincerely,

*Kelly Smith Trimble*

Kelly Smith Trimble  
Senior Editorial Director, HGTV.com  
kelly\_smithtrimble@discovery.com



## Susan Severn Consulting

NONPROFIT DEVELOPMENT  
& GRANT WRITING



Dr. Mark Byrnes,  
Provost  
Middle Tennessee State University  
1302 E. Main Street  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

Dear Provost Byrnes,

I am writing in support of the University's proposed Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric Major. In my work with nonprofit agencies, I see again and again the need for individuals who can communicate in a clear and effective manner.

Public and private nonprofit organizations can only sustain themselves if they can successfully convey their mission and the impact of the work they do. These entities need to be able to share their message in a variety of formats – annual reports, the internet, written pamphlets, training materials, etc. A degree such as the one being discussed by MTSU's College of Liberal Arts is exactly the type of program that would provide local and regional nonprofit staff and board members with the skills they need help our communities improve the quality of life for everyone.

I look forward to the day when I can work with someone who has graduated from MTSU with a degree in Public Writing and Rhetoric.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan B. Severn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Susan B. Severn



Dr. Stephen Severn  
Department of English  
Middle Tennessee State University  
1301 E. Main St., Box 70  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

October 9, 2020

Brooke Ponder  
Regional Office Manager  
Direct: 615.259.1022  
E-Fax: 615.687.1485  
brooke.ponder@arlaw.com

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Brooke Ponder and I am the Regional Office Manager at Adams and Reese LLP. Adams and Reese is a multidisciplinary law firm with nearly 300 attorneys and advisors strategically located throughout the southern United States and Washington, D.C. Our firm provides legal services on a regional, national, and international scale.

As a proud alumna of Middle Tennessee State University, I am writing in enthusiastic support of the Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric. Our lawyers and staff understand that perceptive composition and oral communication are two of the most important cornerstones of our business. We take pride in our talents to communicate expertly with our clients, peers, and coworkers.

In my role as Regional Office Manager, I am constantly looking for potential candidates that are well rounded, goal oriented, and have the educational foundation to succeed in a competitive market. MTSU never fails to provide excellent employees who demonstrate superlative leadership within our office culture, and execute their work with proficient attention to detail. The addition of this specialized major in the Humanities field would add great value and distinction to future candidates for hire. I would personally be delighted to have the opportunity to work with graduates of this program because of the unique assets they would incorporate into their work at Adams and Reese. These assets would include, but not be limited to, interpersonal communication skills, elevated emotional intelligence, and an analytical mindset adept at navigating interdisciplinary problem solving; all of which could be applied to the various channels of our practice areas. A BS in Public Writing and Rhetoric would pave the way to a successful career in the legal field, and any other field for that matter, and serve as a solid foundation for professional growth.

Should you have any questions or require anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me. Go Blue Raiders.

Sincerely,



Brooke Ponder



Dr. Eric Detweiler  
Department of English  
Middle Tennessee State University  
1301 E. Main Street, Box 70  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

October 12, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

As a Tennessee resident and business owner, I am writing in support of Middle Tennessee State University's (MTSU) Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric (PWR). I recently learned about the PWR program from Erica Stone, a new professional and technical writing professor in the English Department, and I am delighted to hear about a new program like this at MTSU where my family member, Boots Donnelly, was a long-time football coach from 1979 to 1998.

As President of Trend Sales, a Memphis-based wholesale food retailer, I am constantly seeking employees who are able to produce documents like detailed sales reports, narrative company newsletters, and engaging social media posts. Written and oral communication skills have been determining factors of efficacy and success for my business for many years, and I know the skills obtained in the PWR program would be a differentiator for the program's graduates.

As more of our business and customer relations move online, I would be interested in hiring graduates of this new major, and I look forward to learning when it is approved by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission.

Sincerely,

  
Joseph Donnelly  
President, Trend Sales  
Memphis, TN

5235 Mendenhall Park Place · Memphis, TN 38115 · office: (901) 368.2698 · (800) 554.9605  
fax: (901) 368.6197 · web: [www.trendsalesinc.com](http://www.trendsalesinc.com)



**Department of Communication Studies**  
MTSU Box 200  
1301 E. Main Street  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132-0001  
(615) 898-2275



TO: Tennessee Higher Education Committee

FROM: Dr. Mary Beth Asbury, <sup>MBA</sup> Interim Chair, Department of Communication Studies

DATE: September 29, 2021

SUBJECT: Support for Public Writing and Rhetoric Degree Program

The purpose of this memo is to notify the Tennessee Higher Education Commission that our department, Communication Studies, supports the approval of the Public Writing and Rhetoric degree program at MTSU. We support the development of the overall program as well as the inclusion of some of our communication classes in their curriculum.

Our department supports this degree program because it will provide good collaborative opportunities for both students and faculty. We can work with and learn from each other. This program also supports the university's goal of promoting interdisciplinary programs that engage students and challenge them to think critically.

Communication Studies has no reservations about supporting and offering some of our classes for curriculum options for the new Public Writing and Rhetoric degree program at MTSU. If you have further questions, please feel free to reach me via email at [MaryBeth.Asbury@mtsu.edu](mailto:MaryBeth.Asbury@mtsu.edu).

CC: Dr. Kate L. Pantelides  
Dr. Eric Detweiler  
Dr. Stephen E. Severn  
Dr. Leah Lyons  
Dr. Mark Byrnes  
Mitzi Brandon

**Department of Media Arts**  
MTSU Box 58  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
(615) 898-5628



October 4, 2021

Dr. Eric Detweiler  
Department of English  
College of Liberal Arts  
Middle Tennessee State University

Dear Dr. Detweiler:

I reviewed your degree proposal for Public Writing and Rhetoric and it looks excellent. I think it will be a great addition to the College of Liberal Arts and the MTSU curriculum.

From an interactive media perspective, I think your proposal comes at an opportune time as more and more communication and interaction have moved into the digital space. As you well know, but which seems a secret to most, writing is at the core of today's online and social world. I'm looking forward to some of the new courses you're developing, especially the Digital Writing course.

I'm glad you are considering our Interactive Media courses, Writing for Interactive Experiences, Audiences and Messaging, and Introduction to Social Media Practice as electives for your program. We will be looking at adding some of your courses to our list of major electives for our program as well.

Once again, congratulations on the new program and much success as you move through the approval process.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd O'Neill".

Todd O'Neill  
Associate Professor  
Coordinator, Interactive Media degree program  
Media Arts Department  
College of Media and Entertainment  
Middle Tennessee State University

October 5, 2021



Curriculum and Program Review Committee  
Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
Nashville, TN

Dear Committee Members,

I am pleased to offer my enthusiastic support to MTSU's proposal to create a Public Writing and Rhetoric undergraduate major (BA/BS). I have discussed this program with my colleagues in the College of Liberal Arts. It seems to me to be an appropriate direction for coursework in that college. The degree offers students the opportunity to develop their critical writing skills but the coursework also positions that development in response to a liberal arts education grounded to writing for a variety of professional needs.

We like to think of a university education as developing the intellectual capacity of our students. I believe this program will do that but it will also steer students into thinking about using their writing and analysis skills in a job market too often dominated by shallow, social media inspired messaging. There is need for the written word. We think we provide one avenue in the School of Journalism and Strategic Media but the new Public Writing and Rhetoric degree is a highly relevant offering. Similarly, I could imagine students in the School of Journalism and Strategic Media completing coursework in this program for a double-major, minor or added electives.

I understand the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) has approved our proposal but that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission must also endorse the proposal. Please convey my support for the proposal!

Should you have questions or need further information, please feel free to contact me at 615-494-8925 or [greg.pitts@mtsu.edu](mailto:greg.pitts@mtsu.edu).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Pitts".

Gregory Pitts, Ph.D.  
Director, School of Journalism and Strategic Media

September 30, 2021

Tennessee Higher Education Commission  
312 Rosa Parks Ave, 9th Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Dr. Ashleigh McKinzie. I am an Assistant Professor in the Sociology and Anthropology Department at Middle Tennessee State University. I write this letter in support of the Public Writing and Rhetoric Program proposed in the College of Liberal Arts at MTSU. In my short letter, I highlight interdisciplinary opportunities and how classes for this proposed major could potentially be cross listed with classes in the Department of Sociology. Moreover, in the Department of Sociology, we have recently launched a Social Justice concentration and a sociology minor in social justice. There are many opportunities within our new concentration and minor that will intersect with proposed classes in Public Writing and Rhetoric.

For instance, the proposed major highlights communication courses in “Culture and Social Influence” and “Rhetoric, Identity, and Difference.” Both courses would be appealing to sociology majors and could potentially count towards degree requirements. Moreover, our social justice concentration focuses on preparing students to be equipped in skills that would assist them community organizing, work in the non-profit sector, and other types of community engagement. I believe that the social justice concentration, in particular, would mesh well with many of the proposed topics for the Public Writing and Rhetoric Program. One of the courses that is required for the concentration and minor in social justice is “Social Movements.” I argue that this would be an excellent way to collaborate with the new program and provide a course that the proposed degree seekers could use to critically think about how effective public writing and discourse is necessary for social change. Finally, our course, “the Sociology of Social Justice” could be utilized by these degree seekers to understand the politics of justice and narrative, and how activists, academics, and public speakers have used their platform to advocate for justice and change.

In short, this proposed degree will undoubtedly give student interdisciplinary opportunities. Effective written and spoken communication are essential skills for the current workplace. In my opinion, MTSU would benefit from such a degree program in that it offers students with skills to think critically and experience various cultural backgrounds.

Please contact me with any questions,



Dr. Ashleigh McKinzie, Ph.D.  
ashleigh.mckinzie@mtu.edu  
Assistant Professor  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

**Women's and Gender Studies Program**

College of Liberal Arts  
James union Building 308  
MTSU Box 498  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
o: 615-898-5910 • f: 615-898-5289



October 5, 2021

Dr. Nita Brooks  
Interim Vice Provost for Academic Programs  
Middle Tennessee State University  
Cope Administration Building, Rm. 111  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132

RE: Proposed Major, Public Writing and Rhetoric

It is with pleasure that I write in support of the proposed major in Public Writing and Rhetoric. The proposal provides an example of the type of major that will prepare students for becoming civically engaged and employed in the service of professional writing for a changing global economy. The development of written communication skills in an interdisciplinary liberal arts context is important for future workers and productive citizens, particularly those who seek to effectively promote social change and social justice.

Opportunities for cross-fertilization among academic programs and courses offered in the social and behavioral sciences, women's and gender studies, and the humanities are consistent with the institutional mission of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's master plan. This is particularly the case in the goals to equip students with transferable written communications skills, closing the writing gap, and the creation of transfer pathways that 'acknowledges liberal arts degrees as workforce degrees.'

I particularly look forward to future collaborations between the Women's and Gender Studies program and Public Writing and Rhetoric in providing classes that address some of the core content for students developing writing skills. This exciting new major can potentially provide MTSU students with practical skills that will be useful in their jobs and life-long civic engagements.

Best Wishes,

*Vicky M. MacLean*

Vicky M. MacLean, Director and  
Professor of Sociology  
MTSU Women's and Gender Studies

Public Writing & Rhetoric (PWR) is an interdisciplinary major that offers students the opportunity to explore both [technical](#) and [non-technical](#) approaches to writing and rhetoric through a flexible course of study. Upon its launch in Fall 2022, PWR majors will have two suggested major pathways: Writing for Social Change and Professional Writing in addition to recommended minors that complement the recommended PWR pathways (see [Example Major Pathways](#)). Regardless of their chosen major pathway, PWR graduates will possess writing-intensive skills in the areas of content strategy, document design, multimedia storytelling, and technical documentation that have been mapped onto the regional jobs data from September 2020. This appendix extends the summary in the body of the NAAP and further proves the employability of PWR graduates in four sections:

**Section 1:** Description of PWR majors' writing-intensive skills

**Section 2:** Quantified job data for the 8 most populous cities in Tennessee

**Section 3:** Regional jobs data mapped onto PWR majors' writing-intensive skills

**Section 4:** Sample job ads for each PWR major pathway

### Section 1: PWR majors' writing-intensive skills

PWR majors will be engaged in the practice and development of four highly desirable writing-intensive skills: content strategy, document design, multimedia storytelling, and technical documentation.

- **Content strategy** is the planning, development, and management of written content across a variety of genres and media platforms
- **Document design** is the process of choosing how to present all of the basic document elements to ensure its clarity, accessibility, and effectiveness.
- **Multimedia storytelling** is the art of conveying a narrative through multiple, interactive forms of media, such as text, audio, and video.
- **Technical documentation** is the documentation of a product's functionality, creation, or architecture in a form that is usable and audience centric.

**Table 1** aligns four regional job categories with PWR's four writing-intensive skills. This alignment was used to create the regional jobs data visualizations on pages 2-5, which further prove the employability of PWR majors and graduates across the state of Tennessee.

<b>Table 1: Alignment of Regional Jobs and PWR Skills</b>	
<b>Regional Job Category</b>	<b>Writing-intensive Skill</b>
Content	Content Strategy
Design	Document Design
Social	Multimedia Storytelling
Web	Technical Documentation



## Section 2: Quantified job data for the 8 most populous cities in Tennessee

The data in **Table 2** represents the findings of a five-day search, conducted from 9/10/20 to 9/15/20 using the website Indeed, for relevant job openings in the state’s eight most populous metropolitan areas in the state of Tennessee as of the 2020 U.S. Census. The job titles we searched for were based on the top 50 writing-intensive job types based on recent, field-specific data. The number of job ads in each location include all openings within 30 days of the five-day search window.

Job Title	Nashville	Memphis	Knoxville	Chattanooga	Clarksville	Murfreesboro	Jackson	Johnson City
<a href="#">Population Data Source</a>	694,144	651,073	187,603	182,799	159,146	146,900	67,191	66,906
Content Administrator	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Content Analyst	8	1	0	0	8	1	0	0
Content Coordinator	7	4	3	3	7	2	0	1
Content Designer	55	7	16	4	1	16	1	4
Content Developer	3	1	1	1	1	2	1	1
Content Editor	8	0	2	0	8	1	0	0
Content Manager	60	9	6	5	1	10	1	3
Content Producer	26	14	9	6	1	3	2	3
Content Specialist	150	56	54	21	12	45	9	7
Content Strategist	18	3	6	2	0	4	1	2
Content Writer	17	4	7	1	1	4	1	1
Documentation Consultant	222	16	41	24	9	46	8	20
Documentation Specialist	389	156	120	69	35	84	21	44
Front End Designer	22	5	3	1	1	5	1	1
Front End Developer	38	8	14	4	1	7	1	3
Grant Writer / Proposal Writer	11	6	4	3	1	1	1	2
Information Architect	169	49	32	13	2	31	1	7
Information Designer	112	31	61	34	1	22	1	3
Information Developer	235	79	60	25	5	33	3	15
Medical / Scientific Writer	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	0

Professional Writer	42	13	11	6	11	3	1	3
Publication Specialist	23	18	17	6	0	9	1	0
Social Media Consultant	31	14	9	6	1	11	0	1
Social Media Coordinator	5	2	3	3	0	0	0	0
Social Media Manager	19	6	2	1	1	6	1	2
Social Media Specialist	76	35	20	12	4	21	2	4
Social Media Writer	1	0	2	0	1	1	0	0
Technical Editor	15	2	5	1	1	1	1	1
Technical Writer	6	5	4	1	1	1	1	1
UI Designer	16	2	7	1	1	1	1	2
UI Developer	36	8	13	5	1	1	2	3
UX Analyst	7	3	3	3	1	1	0	0
UX Architect	23	9	4	4	2	1	0	0
UX Designer	23	2	4	1	1	6	0	0
UX Developer	33	10	8	5	1	8	1	1
UX Manager	25	9	6	3	1	3	1	1
UX Researcher	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
UX Specialist	5	1	2	0	4	1	0	0
Web Content Analyst	5	0	1	1	5	1	0	0
Web Content Coordinator	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Web Content Designer	23	1	11	2	1	6	0	0
Web Content Developer	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
Web Content Editor	3	0	2	0	3	3	0	0
Web Content Manager	28	4	1	1	1	6	1	3
Web Content Producer	6	8	3	3	7	2	0	2
Web Content Specialist	16	5	5	4	1	1	1	0
Web Content Strategist	12	1	6	1	1	3	1	1
Web Content Writer	8	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Web Writer	22	6	10	3	1	6	1	2

### Section 3: Regional jobs data mapped onto PWR majors' writing-intensive skills

To capture visualizable data, each regional job ad was categorized into one of four regional job categories that aligned with a PWR writing-intensive skill (see Table 1). **Table 3** provides a breakdown of the 745 jobs in the Design category for the city of Nashville. This data

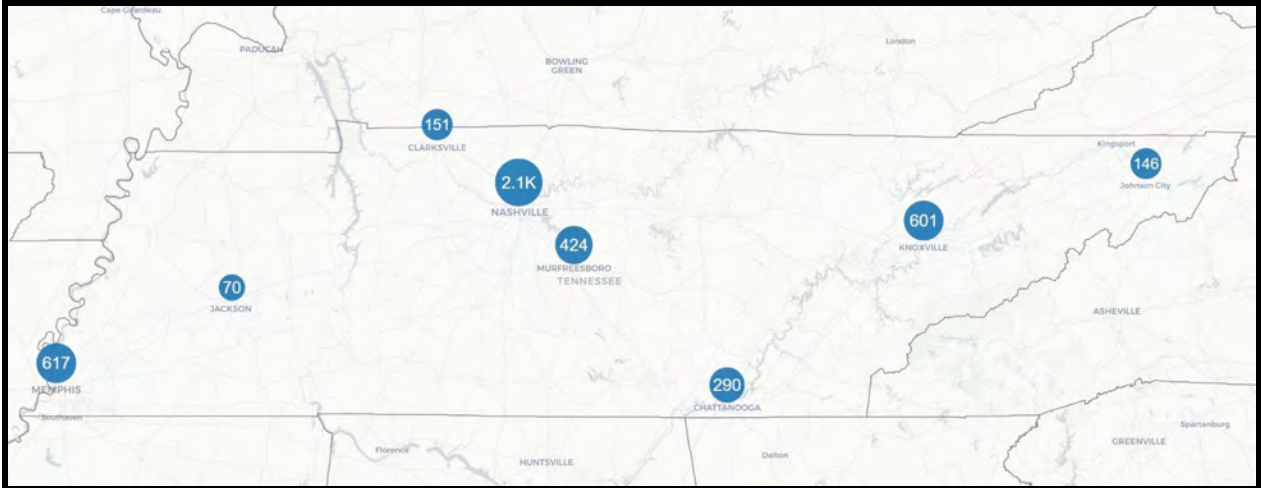
demonstrates that PWR majors who develop expertise in the writing-intensive skill of document design have a high chance of employment in the greater Nashville area. Similar data trends were present for the other three writing-intensive skills (content strategy, multimedia storytelling, technical documentation).

<b>Table 3: Breakdown of Design Jobs in Nashville</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b># of Jobs</b>	<b>City</b>
Design	Front End Designer	22	Nashville
Design	Front End Developer	38	Nashville
Design	Information Architect	169	Nashville
Design	Information Designer	112	Nashville
Design	Information Developer	235	Nashville
Design	UI Designer	16	Nashville
Design	UI Developer	36	Nashville
Design	UX Analyst	7	Nashville
Design	UX Architect	23	Nashville
Design	UX Designer	23	Nashville
Design	UX Developer	33	Nashville
Design	UX Manager	25	Nashville
Design	UX Researcher	1	Nashville
Design	UX Specialist	5	Nashville

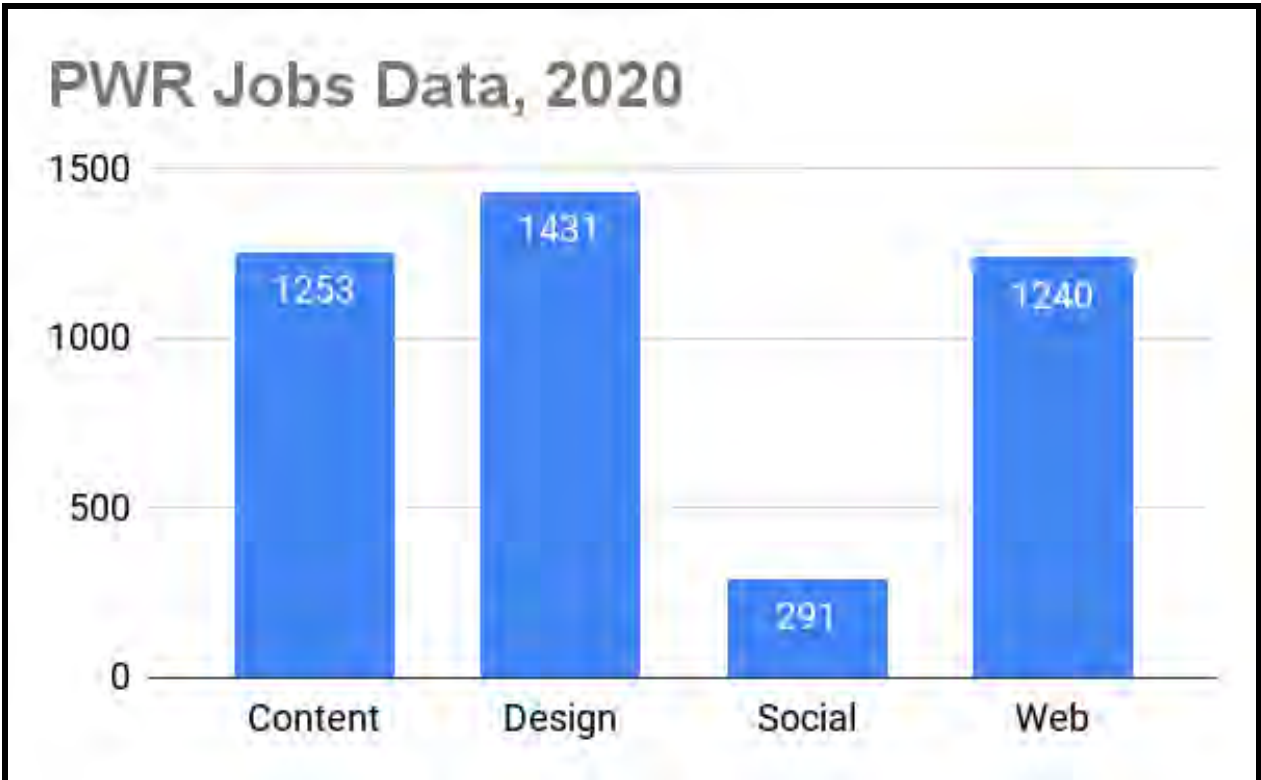
In addition to the breakdown of the regional jobs data in Table 3, this section contains data visualizations that provide a clearer picture of the raw data available in Section 2 and further prove how valuable our PWR graduates would be to the Tennessee workforce.

**List of Figures:**

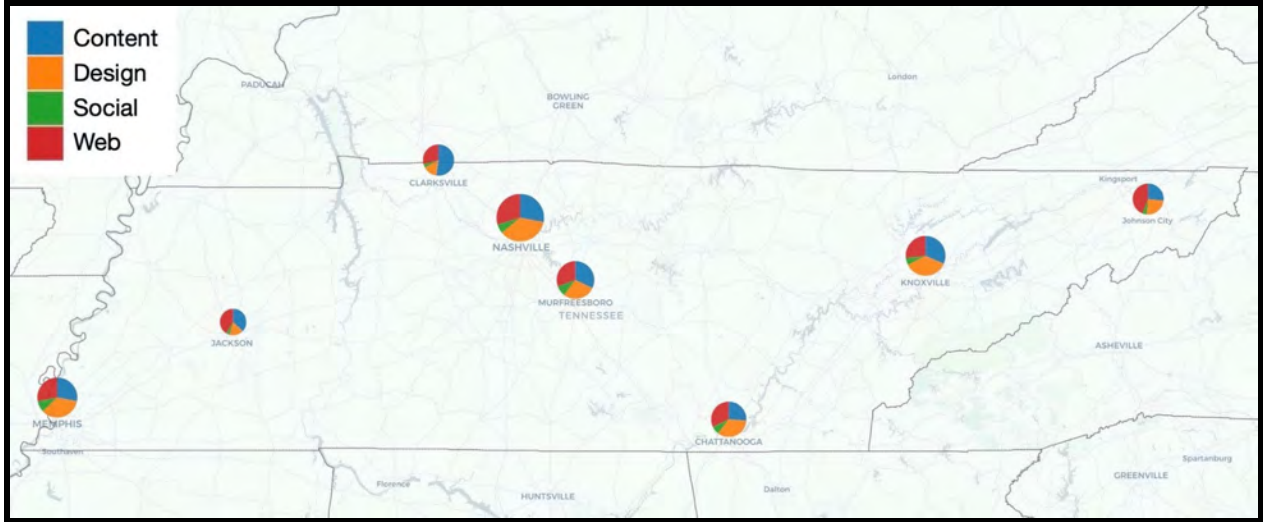
- **Figure 1:** Number of writing-intensive jobs in the 8 most populous cities in TN
- **Figure 2:** Number of jobs in four PWR skill areas
- **Figure 3:** Color-coded jobs in PWR skill areas by city
- **Figure 4:** Percentage of jobs in PWR skill areas the 8 most populous cities in TN
- **Figure 5:** Number of jobs in PWR skill areas the 8 most populous cities in TN



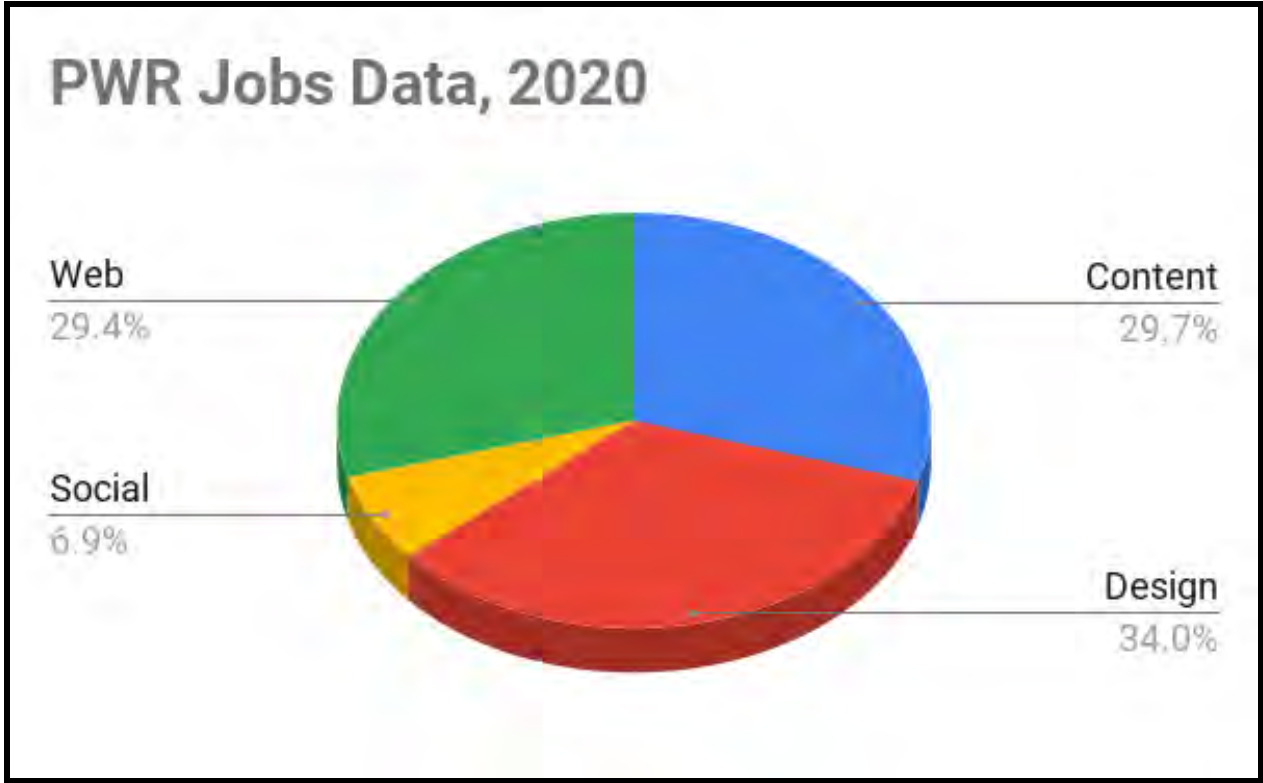
**Figure 1:** Number of writing-intensive jobs in the 8 most populous cities in TN



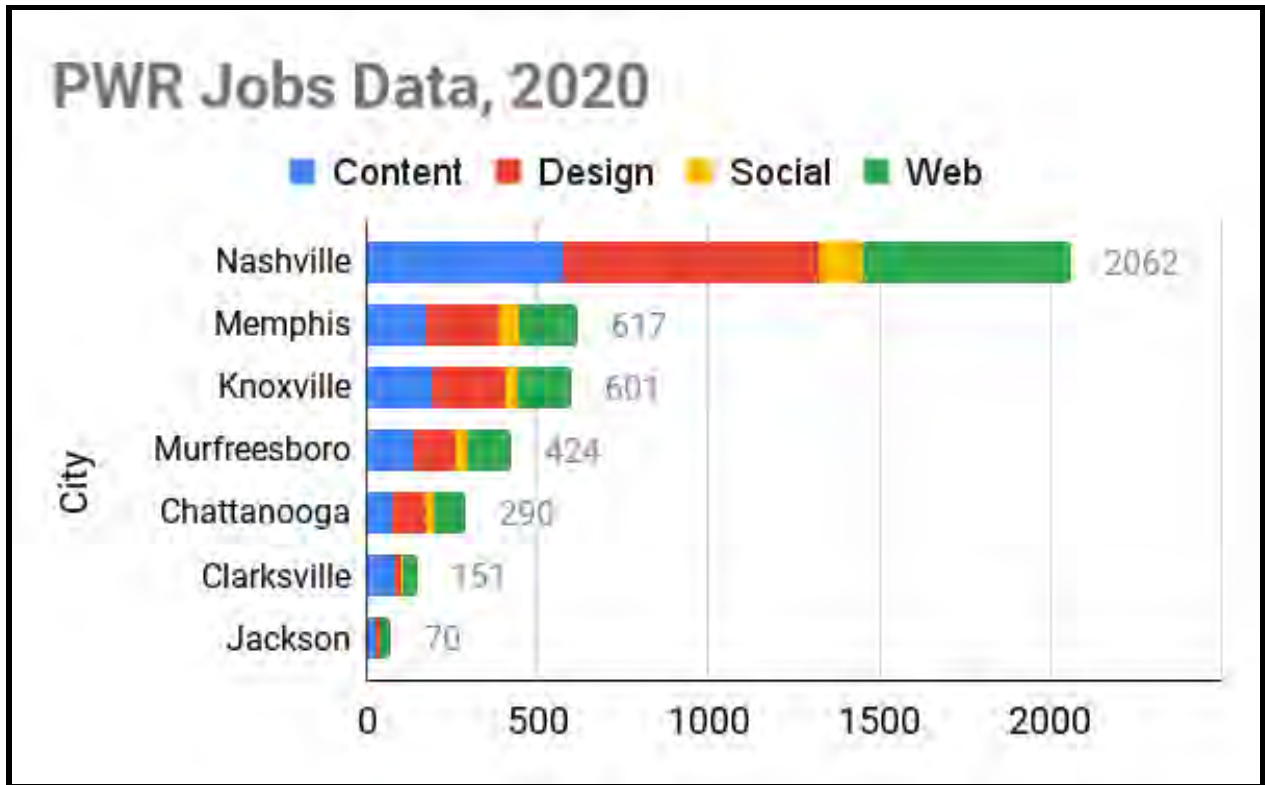
**Figure 2:** Number of jobs in four PWR skill areas



**Figure 3:** Color-coded jobs in PWR skill areas by city



**Figure 4:** Percentage of jobs in PWR skill areas the 8 most populous cities in TN



**Figure 5:** Number of jobs in PWR skill areas the 8 most populous cities in TN

#### Section 4: Sample job ads for each PWR major pathway

Since the quantitative data in Sections 1-3 was collected in September 2020, we collected two sample job ads in September 2021—one for each major pathway—that further solidify the employability of future PWR majors. Each job ad highlights the need for writing-intensive skills like content strategy, document design, storytelling, and technical documentation.

##### Writing for Social Change—Sample Job Ad

The Writing for Social Change Pathway offers PWR majors the opportunity to explore the history, theory, and method/ologies of public writing and rhetoric in a variety of contexts, communities, and cultures. Students who choose the Writing for Social Change Pathway are likely to work as writers in the public, nonprofit, or education sectors.

##### Salvation Army, Grant Writer, Community Relations & Development; Memphis, TN

On September 20, 2021, the Salvation Army, an internationally recognized non-profit, faith-based organization, posted a job ad for a Grant Writer in Memphis, Tennessee, which has been pasted below. A PWR graduate would be well-positioned for this job with their writing-intensive skills like content strategy, document design, storytelling, and technical documentation.

##### Education and Experience:

Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a related field, and five years' experience writing technical reports and/or researching and applying for grant funds, or any

equivalent combination of training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities.

**Job Summary:**

The Grant Writer researches, locates, studies, prioritizes, and contacts funding sources in order to apply for grant funds; prepares grant applications and compiles required paperwork to maximize opportunities for financial support for The Salvation Army programs; works with Finance Department to administer existing grants and ensure compliance with contract restrictions; serves as liaison to funding sources.

**Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:**

Knowledge of the principles and practices of grant research, applications, and administration; knowledge of the principles and practices of basic bookkeeping; ability to research funding sources and to be creative in overcoming funding barriers; ability to prepare, read and interpret legal documents, technical reports, contracts and agreements; ability to administer grants/contracts in compliance with legal guidelines and restrictions; ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing; ability to work independently and with limited supervision; ability to build and maintain effective working relationships in the community and specifically with contacts at funding agencies; ability to prepare and maintain grant/contract files and records in a neat and organized manner; ability to expedite all grant applications, proposals, and any required post-funding reports to meet all deadlines.

**Professional Writing—Sample Job Ad**

The Professional Writing Pathway offers PWR majors the opportunity to explore the history, theory, and method/ologies of public writing and rhetoric in ways that emphasize technical contexts, communities, and cultures. Students who choose the Professional Writing Pathway are likely to find jobs in software development, technical writing, content strategy, and government and regulatory environments.

On September 16, 2021, the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, Tennessee, posted a job ad for a Publications Coordinator, which has been pasted below. A PWR graduate would be well-positioned for this job with their writing-intensive skills like content strategy, document design, storytelling, and technical documentation.

**Frist Art Museum, Publications Coordinator; Nashville, TN**

**Job Summary**

This position requires a dedicated team member who understands publishing and can facilitate its associated workflows, is a skilled proofreader, and has a working knowledge of securing image rights and associated digital asset management. The Publications Coordinator is responsible for routing and proofreading printed and digital materials produced by all departments at the Frist Art Museum. The ideal candidate will be highly organized, accustomed to working in a complex office environment, with excellent time-management skills to juggle projects with long- and short-term deadlines. This position also serves as the rights, permissions, and licensing coordinator for the Frist Art Museum, and will support the Managing Editor with all policies, procedures, and activities related to intellectual property and use of rights-managed images and other media at the museum. Preference will be given to applicants fluent in Spanish and capable of proofreading documents in the language.

**Education:** B.A. in English, journalism, or related field.

### **Job Responsibilities**

Under the direction of the Managing Editor and in collaboration with staff from all departments, the Publications Coordinator will facilitate:

- Routing and proofreading: After receiving submissions and Managing
- Editor sets schedules and deadlines, sets up project deadlines within our project management software; routes projects to key stakeholders, proofread later proofs to ensure all changes are implemented, track progress and approvals, follow up with content providers about project status.
- Digital asset management: process incoming digital assets, including file labeling, file sharing, and following archiving protocols.
- Rights and reproductions coordination: conduct initial research to determine copyright owners and licensors; correspond with rights holders to request assets, secure permissions, negotiate and pay fees, and provide documentation of image use; and maintain a summary of activities
- Administrative tasks: electronically file and archive publications projects, mail catalogs, and other components to rights holders as requested.
- Work with volunteers and interns, as needed.
- Attend planning meetings.
- Perform other duties, as assigned.

### **Qualifications:**

- Strong work ethic and excellent communication skills.
- Ability to work with and relate to people with different backgrounds.
- Knowledge of editing and proofreading methods, including electronic editing.
- Working knowledge of US copyright law and/or image licensing protocols is beneficial.
- Skilled with computer applications, particularly Microsoft Office Suite and Adobe Creative Cloud; aptitude for learning new applications quickly.
- Exceptional time management, including the ability to juggle multiple short- and long-term projects in a deadline-driven environment.
- Attention to detail.
- Discretion.

### **Beneficial Experience:**

- Familiarity with the Chicago Manual of Style (17th ed.) and the AP Stylebook.
- Fluency in Spanish, with an ability to proofread Spanish translations.
- Working knowledge of Basecamp or similar project management



## Appendix G-1 Sample Program of Study (Full-Time)

### Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric - MTSU

Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring	Fall	Spring
COMM 2200 3	Elective 3	PWR 3000 3	PWR 3010 3	PWR 4000 3	ENGL 4605 3	PWR 3020 3	PWR 4999 3
Soc / Behav Sci 1 3	HIST 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, or 2050 3	Nat Sci 2 4	ENGL 3570 3	ENGL 3645 3	ENGL 4640 3	ENGL 4670 3	Elective 3
ENGL 1010 3	MATH 3	ENGL 2020, 2030 or HUM 2610 3	HUM / FA 2 3	ENGL 4530 3	Soc / Behav Sci 2 3	Elective 1	COMM 3810 3
HUM / FA 1 3	ENGL 1020 3	Elective 3	Elective 3	Elective 3	Elective 3	Minor Course 3	Elective 3
HIST 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, or 2050 3	Nat Sci 1 4	Elective 3	Minor Course 3	Minor Course 3	Minor Course 3	Minor Course 3	Minor Course / Elective 3
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>15</b>

Major Core	12
Major Electives	24
Minor	15-18
General Ed	41
Electives	25-28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>

**TOTAL = 120**

**Appendix G-2  
Sample Program of Study (Part-Time)  
Bachelor of Science in Public Writing and Rhetoric - MTSU**

<u>Year One</u>			<u>Year Two</u>			<u>Year Three</u>			<u>Year Four</u>		
Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer
COMM 2200 3	HUM / FA 1 3	Nat Sci 1 4	Elective 3	ENGL 1020 3	ENGL 2020, 2030 or HUM 2610 3	PWR 3000 3	PWR 3010 3	HUM / FA 2 3	ENGL 3570 3	Elective 3	Minor Course 3
ENGL 1010 3	Soc / Behav Sci 1 3	HIST 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, or 2050 3	MATH 3	HIST 2010, 2020, 2030, 2040, or 2050 3	Nat Sci 2 4	Elective 3	Minor Course 3	Elective 3	Minor Course 3	Elective 3	Soc / Behav Sci 2 3
6	6	7	6	6	7	6	6	6	6	6	6
<u>Year Five</u>			<u>Year Six</u>			<u>Year Seven</u>					
Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring	Summer	Fall	Spring				
PWR 4000 3	ENGL 4640 3	ENGL 4605 3	ENGL 3645 3	Elective 3	Elective 3	ENGL 4530 3	Elective 1				
Minor Course 3	Minor Course 3	Minor Course / Elective 3	PWR 3020 3	ENGL 4670 3	Elective 3	COMM 3810 3	PWR 4999 3				
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	4				

**TOTAL = 120**

Major Core	12
Major Electives	24
Minor	15-18
General Ed	41
Electives	25-28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>120</b>

## PWR Strategic Recruitment Plan

The project implementation date for the B.S. in Public Writing and Rhetoric (PWR) is Fall 2022. In order to achieve the enrollment targets projected in the New Academic Program Proposal, it is critical to launch a comprehensive marketing and student recruitment effort well ahead of the Fall 2022 term. This plan outlines how the PWR faculty and program coordinator will recruit students to enroll in PWR courses and commit to the PWR major.

### Enrollment Targets

	Full-time Headcount	Part-time Headcount	Total Headcount	Estimated Tuition & Fees
<b>Planning Year: 2021-22</b>	1	0	0	0
<b>Year 1: 2022-23</b>	10	5	15	\$116,380
<b>Year 2: 2023-24</b>	20	5	25	\$207,080
<b>Year 3: 2024-25</b>	30	5	35	\$297,780
<b>Year 4: 2025-26</b>	40	5	45	\$388,480
<b>Year 5: 2026-27</b>	50	5	55	\$479,180

### Marketing & Recruitment Activities for Planning Year & Year 1

**10/2020-5/2021:** Work with Vice Provost for Academic Programs to develop and submit NAPP to THEC

#### **5/2021-11/2021: Prepare Marketing Materials & Plan**

- Work with Marketing and Public Affairs to craft press release
- Work with Marketing and Graphics to develop web page, video, and print materials
- Develop social media platforms and strategy
- Develop new PWR brochures and banner for recruiting events
- Design and print PWR swag (e.g., buttons, t-shirts, hats, cups, pens, notepads)
- Conduct ongoing qualitative/quantitative research on public writing jobs in the greater Nashville area for public-facing website
- Ensure marketing and promotional materials include potential areas of specialization, student-facing curriculum maps, and relevant professional paths.

#### **12/2021: THEC Board Approves New Academic Program**

- Press release announcing new degrees is distributed
- Campus-wide email announcing degree approval
- Email to students in communication studies, journalism, interactive media, and other degree programs for whom a double major in PWR is especially relevant
- Revised MTSU programs and new PWR web pages are published

- Launch social media platforms; launch social media strategy plan
- Develop recruitment materials (e.g., brochures, banners, rack cards, billboard on I-24)
- “PWR Starting in Fall 2022” announcement on MTSU homepage
- Contact media relations to draft an MTSU News article about the new degree; interview program coordinator and writing studies faculty

### **12/2021-5/2022: Campus Education & Outreach**

- Meet with Admissions Office (recruiters), CBAS, CBUS, CBHS, and CLA College Advisors, and Undeclared Advisors to brief recruiters on new degree that is proposed for Fall 2022.
- Contact student organizations and university centers that support underrepresented students to help promote the major to underrepresented student populations.
- Contact CLA, CBAS, Media and Entertainment, CBHS, CBUS, Veterans Center, and Undeclared Advisors to confirm approval of new PWR major
- Meet with MTSU Alumni Relations to determine which alums are working in public writing, rhetoric, and technical communication; alert them to the new major
- Meet with faculty who will be teaching PWR courses outside of English (e.g., Communication, Journalism, Interactive Media) and talk with them about the new degree program, expectations, and recruitment efforts
- Formally create the PWR Student Ambassadors organization to help spread the word across campus; elect officers and allow them to develop their own ad hoc recruitment strategy for student organizations and campus events
- Organize student interest meetings to answer questions about the new major
- Promote the program through CLA Scholars Day, Celebration of Student Writing, Undergraduate Research, and other MTSU, CLA, and English Department events and marketing outlets
- Design and implement a formal recruiting strategy for ENGL 1010 and ENGL 1020 courses; will likely include a 5-slide PowerPoint and class visits from PWR Student Ambassadors
- Invite guest speakers from Nashville businesses (see Advisory Board; LON letter writers) to speak about their daily writing genres, work experience, etc.

### **12/2021-5/2022: Community Education & Outreach**

- Formally create the PWR external Advisory Board that incorporates business professionals already working in public writing, rhetoric, and technical communication jobs in the greater Nashville area; consider asking businesses who wrote letters for the LON to join the Advisory Board
- Send announcements to the relevant businesses owned by MTSU alumni to announce the degree to the Nashville community
- Send announcements to each of the businesses who wrote letters of support for the LON
- Promote PWR major to community colleges through advisors and programs that are connected to/adjacent to the degree
- Send press release and article to TN Hospitality and Tourism Association to announce degree
- Announce to high school feeder programs and communicate with guidance counselors
- Identify technology and communication related classes in feeder high schools and speak in schools to promote the new degree

- Speak and promote at local meetups and organizations engaged in public writing, rhetoric, and technical communication
- True Blue Tour

### **1/2022-2/2022: Enhanced Recruitment Period**

- Email/text sent to all “undeclared” majors informing them of new degree option
- PWR billboard active on I-24
- PWR announcement on MTSU homepage
- Continue Campus and Community Outreach plans as described above
- Continue to maintain the Marketing Plan as described above

### **3/2022: Pre-registration and Registration Prep**

- Contact CLA, CBAS, Media and Entertainment, CBHS, CBUS, Veterans Center, and Undeclared Advisors to confirm approval of PWR major

### **4/2022: Priority Registration for Fall 2022**

- Follow up email/text to “undeclared” majors

### **5/2022: Customs for New and Transfer Students**

- PWR Faculty & Program Coordinator attend:
  - Freshman orientation
  - Transfer Orientation
  - Preview Days

### **8/2022-12/2022: First Semester of PWR Major**

- Welcome first cohort of PWR majors
- Continue Campus and Community Outreach plans as described above
- Continue to maintain the Marketing Plan as described above
- Identify out-of-state majors for potential Academic Common Market opportunities
- Priority registration begins for Spring 2023
- Survey of current PWR students to evaluate successful recruiting techniques

### **1/2023-5/2023: Second Semester of PWR Major**

- Continue Campus and Community Outreach plans as described above
- Continue to maintain the Marketing Plan as described above
- Professionalization and Career Workshop

### **Ongoing Recruitment Activities for Years 2-5**

#### Fall Semesters

- Continue Campus and Community Outreach plans as described above
- Continue to maintain the Marketing Plan as described above
- Survey of current PWR students to evaluate successful recruiting techniques

#### Spring Semesters

- Continue Campus and Community Outreach plans as described above
- Continue to maintain the Marketing Plan as described above
- Survey of current PWR students to evaluate successful recruiting techniques

### Example Major Pathways

As an interdisciplinary major, PWR offers students the opportunity to explore both [technical](#) and [non-technical](#) approaches to writing and rhetoric through a flexible course of study. The sections below detail two sample pathways for PWR majors: Writing for Social Change and Professional Writing. Along with a suggested course of study for the PWR major, each pathway has recommended minors that correspond to the types of expected employment for that pathway. Regardless of their chosen major pathway, PWR graduates will develop and graduate with writing-intensive skills in the areas of content strategy, document design, multimedia storytelling, and technical documentation ([Appendix E](#) explains how these skills map onto regional jobs data).

#### Writing for Social Change Pathway

The Writing for Social Change Pathway offers a focused but flexible course of study that reflects PWR’s broader focus on teaching students strategies for producing effective writing and understanding the complex rhetorical decisions involved in crafting written content across a variety of technological platforms, public audiences, and professional contexts. Specifically, this pathway will teach students to produce and understand the kinds of writing that can help bring about change in areas like political advocacy, nonprofit work, and public outreach and education. Such work includes positions in the US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) “Writers and Authors” category. According to the BLS, “employment of writers and authors is projected to grow 9 percent from 2020 to 2030, about as fast as the average for all occupations” and approximately “15,400 openings for writers and authors are projected each year, on average, over the decade” (“Writers and Authors”). A sample job ad for the Writing for Social Change Pathway and regional jobs data can be found in Appendix E. A professional development coordinator will work with PWR majors who would like to complete an internship with a local political group (e.g., League of Women Voters), writing-centered nonprofit (e.g., Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press), or educational organization (e.g., MTSU Write).

Writing for Social Change - PWR Major Pathway		
General Education		41 credits
Public Writing & Rhetoric Major Core		12 credits
PWR 3000*	Public Writing & Rhetoric	3 credits
PWR 4000	Experimental Writing	3 credits
ENGL 4605	Advanced Composition	3 credits
PWR 4999*	Writing Your Future (Senior Capstone)	3 credits
Public Writing & Rhetoric Electives		24 credits
PWR 3010*	Community Writing	3 credits

PWR 3030	Cultural Rhetorics	3 credits
ENGL 4600*	Writing Internship	3 credits
ENGL 2500	Introduction to Creative Writing	3 credits
ENGL 3630	Creative Nonfiction Workshop	3 credits
ENGL 3505	Writing Workshop Methodologies	3 credits
ENGL 4530	History of the English Language	3 credits
COMM 3810	Topics in Culture and Social Influence	3 credits
Other Electives		25-28 credits
IAM 3060	Writing for Interactive Experiences	3 credits
IAM 3850	Online Strategy and Search Engine Optimization	3 credits
IAM 3950	Content Strategy and Management	3 credits
IAM 4350	User Experience Fundamentals	3 credits
IAM 4450	Understanding Digital Analytics	3 credits
COMM 3250	Communication in Nonprofit Organizations	3 credits
COMM 3580	Political Communication	3 credits
COMM 4650	History & Theory of Rhetoric	3 credits
Minor—See a list of suggested minors below		15-18 credits
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>120 credits</b>

*\*Experiential Learning Courses*

### **Suggested Minors for Writing for Social Change Pathway:**

#### **Communication (15 credits)**

- COMM 2100 - Introduction to Human Communication (3 credits)
- COMM 3240 - Introduction to Organizational Communication (3 credits)
- COMM 3560 - Intercultural Communication (3 credits)
- COMM 3750 - Quantitative Research Methods in Communication (3 credits)
- COMM 4100 - Rhetoric, Identity, and Difference (3 credits)

#### **Journalism (18 credits)**

- JOUR 1020 - American Media and Social Institutions (3 credits)
- JOUR 2710 - Media Writing (3 credits)

- JOUR 2720 - Digital Media Skills (3 credits)
- JOUR 3430 - Electronic Media News Writing (3 credits)
- JOUR 3650 - Free Expression, Mass Media, and the American Public (3 credits)
- JOUR 4850 - Ethics and Mass Communication (3 credits)

### **Women's & Gender Studies**

- WGST 2100 - Introduction to Women's Studies (3 credits)
- WGST 4500 - Feminist Theory (3 credits)
- ANTH 3710 - Topics in Anthropology (3 credits)
- ANTH 3750 - Race, Class, and Gender (3 credits)
- COMM 3225 - Gender Communication (3 credits)
- JOUR 4800 - Seminar in Media Issues (3 credits)

### **Social Justice (18 credits)**

- SOC 2010 - Social Problems (3 credits)
- SOC 3511 - Social Justice (3 credits)
- SOC 4511 - Social Movements and Social Change (3 credits)
- SOC 3300 - Diversity in the Workplace (3 credits)
- SOC 3400 - Gender and Society (3 credits)
- SOC 4011 - Social Inequality (3 credits)

### **Political & Civic Engagement (18 credits)**

- PS 1005 - American Government and Politics (3 credits)
- PS 3550 - Democratic Participation and Civic Advocacy (3 credits)
- EXL 2030 - Civic Engagement Practicum (1 credit)
- EXL 3030 - Civic Engagement Practicum (1 credit)
- PS 2100 - Legal Courtroom Procedure (1 credit)
- PS 2110 - Moot Court (1 credit)
- PS 2120 - Mediation Procedure (1 credit)
- PS 2130 - Model United Nations and Crisis Simulation (1 credit)
- PS 2140 - Tennessee Intercollegiate State Legislature (1 credit)
- PS 4270 - Political Campaign Internship (1 credit)
- PS 4290 - Public Service Internship (1 credit)
- PS 4950 - Community-Based Research Practicum (3 credits)

### **Professional Writing Pathway**

The Professional Writing Pathways offers a focused but flexible course of study that reflects PWR's broader focus on teaching students strategies for producing effective writing and understanding the complex rhetorical decisions involved in crafting written content across a variety of technological platforms, public audiences, and professional contexts. This pathway puts particular emphasis on the writing skills students need to thrive in and adapt to today's dynamic workplaces and fast-changing writing-intensive occupations. Students who choose the Professional Writing Pathway are likely to find jobs in software development, technical writing, content strategy, and government and regulatory environments. According to the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), professional and technical writing jobs are expected to "grow 12 percent from 2020 to 2030, faster than the average for all occupations" and approximately "5,500 openings for technical writers are projected each year, on average, over the decade" ("Technical Writers"). A sample job ad for the Professional Writing Pathway and regional jobs data can be found in Appendix E. A professional development coordinator will work with PWR majors who would like to complete an internship with a relevant local company.



<b>Professional Writing - PWR Major Pathway</b>		
General Education		41 credits
Public Writing & Rhetoric Major Core		12 credits
PWR 3000*	Public Writing & Rhetoric	3 credits
PWR 4000	Experimental Writing	3 credits
ENGL 4605	Advanced Composition	3 credits
PWR 4999*	Writing Your Future (Senior Capstone)	3 credits
Public Writing & Rhetoric Electives		24 credits
PWR 3010*	Community Writing	3 credits
PWR 3020*	Digital Writing	3 credits
ENGL 3620	Professional Writing	3 credits
ENGL 4640*	Advanced Technical Writing	3 credits
ENGL 4670	Special Topics in Writing	3 credits
ENGL 3505	Writing Workshop Methodologies	3 credits
ENGL 4510	Modern English Grammar & Usage	3 credits
COMM 4100	Rhetoric, Identity, & Difference	3 credits
Other Electives		25-28 credits
IAM 3060	Writing for Interactive Experiences	3 credits
IAM 3070	Introduction to Social Media Practice	3 credits
IAM 3950	Content Strategy and Management	3 credits
IAM 4350	User Experience Fundamentals	3 credits
COMM 3260	Communication in Healthcare Organizations	3 credits
COMM 3580	Political Communication	3 credits
COMM 4650	History & Theory of Rhetoric	3 credits

JOUR 3650	Free Expression, Mass Media, and the American Public	3 credits
Minor—See a list of suggested minors below		15-18 credits
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>120 credits</b>

*\*Experiential Learning Courses*

### **Suggested Minors for Professional Writing Pathway:**

#### **Data Science (16 credits)**

- MATH 1530 - Applied Statistics (3 credits)
- CSCI 1170 - Computer Science I (4 credits)
- DATA 1500 - Introduction to Data Science (3 credits)
- DATA 3500 - Data Cleansing and Feature Engineering (3 credits)
- DATA 3550 - Applied Predictive Modeling (3 credits)

#### **Computer Science (17 credits)**

- CSCI 1170 - Computer Science I (4 credits)
- CSCI 2170 - Computer Science II (4 credits)
- CSCI 3033 - Computer Languages: Java (3 credits)
- CSCI 3038 - Computer Languages: Python (3 credits)
- CSCI 3110 - Algorithms and Data Structures (3 credits)

#### **Leadership Studies (17 credits)**

- LEAD 3010 - Leadership Theories and Practices (3 credits)
- LEAD 4001 - Leadership Seminar (1 credit)
- EXL 3020 - Leadership Studies Practicum (3 credits)
- 12 hours chosen from selected electives (12 credits)

#### **Interactive Media (15 credits)**

- 1 of the following 3 courses:
  - EMC 1020 - American Media and Social Institutions (3 credits)
  - JOUR 1020 - American Media and Social Institutions (3 credits)
  - RIM 1020 - American Media and Social Institutions (3 credits)
- IAM 2500 - Survey of Interactive Media (3 credits)
- IAM 3060 - Writing for Interactive Experiences (3 credits)
- IAM 3065 - Audiences and Messaging (3 credits)
- 1 of the following 3 courses:
  - EMC 4250 - Mass Media Law (3 credits)
  - PHOT 4190 - Ethics and Law for Visual Communicators (3 credits)
  - RIM 3700 - Copyright Law (3 credits)



**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **Approval of New Academic Degree Program  
M.S., Supply Chain Management**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

University Policy 251, Approval of Academic Programs, Units, and Modifications, states all academic actions that require review and approval by THEC must be approved by the Board of Trustees.

Attached for approval is an Academic Program Modification proposal to elevate the existing concentration in Supply Chain Management within the Master of Science (M.S.) in Management to a free-standing M.S. degree with a major in Supply Chain Management effective Summer 2022.



# Academic Program Modification: Master of Science in Supply Chain Management

This proposal changes the previous M.S. in Management (concentration in Supply Chain Management) to a stand-alone Degree, M.S. in Supply Chain Management.

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**Current and Proposed Program Name (and any concentrations), Degree Designation, and CIP Code**

<b>Before Proposed Change</b> <i>(List as it now appears on the official Academic Program Inventory at THEC.)</i>			<b>After Proposed Change</b> <i>(List as it should appear on the official Academic Program Inventory at THEC, once approved.)</i>		
<b>Title</b> Title of Existing Academic Program (Including all existing concentrations before program modification)	<b>Degree</b>	<b>CIP Code</b>	<b>Title</b> Title of New Program after program modification is approved (including all concentrations)	<b>Degree</b>	<b>CIP Code</b>
Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply Chain Management concentration</li> <li>• Organization Leadership concentration</li> <li>• Not-for Profit Management concentration (made inactive in 2021)</li> </ul>	M.S.	52.0201	Supply Chain Management  Management – Organization Leadership Concentration	M.S.  M.S.	52.0203  52.0201

**Proposed Implementation Date:**

Summer 2022

**Proposed Termination Date for Any Concentrations Proposed as Free Standing:**

The existing Supply Chain Management (SCM) concentration as part of the M.S. in Management major will be phased-out at the end of the 2024 summer term.

**Anticipated Delivery Site:**

Middle Tennessee State University campus — Murfreesboro, TN

**Name and Contact Information of MTSU Academic Program Liaison (APL):**

Amy Aldridge Sanford, PhD  
 Vice Provost for Academic Programs  
 Middle Tennessee State University  
 Cope Administration Building, Room 111  
 Phone: 615-494-7611  
 E-Mail – [amy.aldridge.sanford@mtsu.edu](mailto:amy.aldridge.sanford@mtsu.edu)

## **Background for Proposed Academic Program Modification**

The Department of Management in the Jones College of Business requests the elevation of our existing M.S. in Management with a concentration in Supply Chain Management to a free-standing M.S. in Supply Chain Management.

Supply chain management is an important industry segment in the mid-state area. The Nashville Chamber of Commerce long-term economic development strategy includes five target industries that drive Middle Tennessee's economy and provide a concentrated focus for strategically growing the region. Supply chain management is one of those five target industries. As more supply chain organizations locate to the area, the demand for supply chain professionals continues to grow. Supply chain talent is needed within manufacturing, distribution, logistics, and procurement organizations.

Offering a M.S. in Supply Chain Management rather than the concentration in the M.S. in Management offers several opportunities for students:

1. Many students working in manufacturing, distribution, and retail have/are transitioning into supply chain roles at their companies. Providing a master's degree allows them to learn the skills needed to do well in those roles. In addition, these employees often have degrees in other disciplines, so earning a degree in supply chain management opens opportunities for advancement in their profession.
2. The M.S. in Supply Chain Management will provide students a better opportunity to compete for professional supply chain jobs that require above the entry level skills.
3. SCM degree graduates will have the specialized skill sets needed to compete for these jobs since a major allows students to have more supply chain management content than the concentration.

Three additional benefits of the M.S. in Supply Chain Management to the department are:

1. A SCM master's degree will demonstrate MTSU's commitment to supply chain among the local supply chain focused companies. Many of these industry leaders have encouraged the faculty to develop a more focused SCM degree.
2. A named master's degree in SCM at MTSU provides opportunities for undergraduate graduates to focus on supply chain as a addition to the focus of their undergraduate degree. This may lead to more students working toward a M.S. in SCM degree at MTSU.
3. The name supply chain management has brand recognition and offering a degree with this name helps to leverage recruiting efforts for both students and industry partners.

The proposed M.S. in Supply Chain Management was reviewed and approved by the Management Department in the Jones College of Business.

## Need for Program

The Nashville Chamber of Commerce has identified supply chain management as one of five industries that drive the middle Tennessee economy. The other four target industries for Nashville include corporate operations, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, and music & entertainment. Although these other four industries are not specifically named supply chain, each industry listed has major supply chain functions. Many supply chain graduates are employed at corporate operations in various planning roles for logistics or inventory/material management. Likewise, every manufacturing entity has a significant supply chain network to provide raw materials. Healthcare and music & entertainment organizations are highly involved with group purchasing organizations and other strategies to leverage purchasing power.

According to data from the Tennessee Department of Labor, employment projections for 2014 – 2024, Tennessee employment in production operations will increase from 267,630 to 296,410 employees and employment in transportation and material moving occupations will increase from 264,460 to 295,380 employees. More specifically in the Nashville area (Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin MSA), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data indicates that transportation and material moving accounted for 102,930 jobs in May 2019, representing 10.3 % of local employment. While these employees are wage earners such as truck drivers, transportation inspectors, and first-line material moving supervisors, this large percent of workers will need managers to organize SCM work. More specifically in Rutherford County, the Supply Chain Council (part of Rutherford Works, a division of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce) has identified supply chain management as one of five key workforce sectors in the county based on a labor market demand based on a study in 2015. Currently, the demand for supply chain talent in Middle TN outpaces the supply of new graduates. Globally, the shortage of supply chain talent is even more pronounced. A recent study by DHL, a global logistics provider, indicates that for every supply chain graduate, there are six to nine unfilled job openings. According to Rutherford Works, Tennessee is projected to have more than 9,200 annual openings within the supply chain management sector.

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics data (September 2021), growth in employment demand in the United States from 2020 – 2030 is expected to be significant for supply chain management professional roles.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>2020 Employment</b>	<b>2030 Employment</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Industrial production managers	189,300	199,300	5.3 %
Purchasing Managers	74,000	79,000	6.1 %
Transportation, Storage, and Distribution Managers	137,600	149,000	8.3 %

Logisticians is a SCM occupation that is listed by the BLS as one of the “fastest growing occupations” in the United States. Expectations are that between 2020 and 2030, the demand for these workers will increase by 29.5 % (from 191,000 to 247,300).

Middle Tennessee and MTSU are well positioned to provide skilled employees to the Middle TN region that has a strong SCM company base. This is due to Nashville/middle Tennessee being centrally located, allowing businesses to reach U.S. and international locations with ease and affordability. Fifty percent of the U.S. population lives within 650 miles of Nashville, and 24 states



are located within that 650-mile radius. Tennessee borders eight states. These location advantages translate to one- and two-day truck delivery times to more than 75 percent of all U.S. markets. As a result of these geographic advantages, Middle Tennessee is an attractive location for many industrial manufacturers and distributors. Major local employers of Supply Chain professionals include Nissan North America, UPS, Ingram Distribution, Amazon, OHL/Geodis, Under Armour, Dollar General, Tractor Supply, Kasai, Geodis, Bridgestone, General Mills, Frito Lay, and Schwann Cosmetics. The Jones College of Business Department of Management have strong relationships with these companies and the department provides talent to many of the mid-state supply chain organizations.

The supply chain management concentration in the M.S. in Management began in the fall of 2013 with 5 students in the SCM concentration. Enrollment for the fall of 2021 was 46 students. All Campus projects that the online MTSU SCM master's program has the potential for 86 total enrollments within five years.

### **Potential Impact of Modification on Current Program**

Changing the supply chain management concentration to a supply chain management degree will have no adverse impact on fiscal resources, diversity or other clientele. It will not cause any change for current students in curriculum or requirements for graduation. Students currently enrolled will not be required to transition, but they will have the option.

While a stand-alone M.S. in Supply Chain Management will reduce the number of graduates with a M.S. in Management because the graduates of the new supply chain management degree will be listed under a separate degree, it will not adversely impact the M.S. in management. The M.S. in Management had a fall 2021 enrollment headcount of 84 students after subtracting the supply chain management concentration, so it will not be adversely impacted by this action (see Enrollment and Degrees Awarded by Concentration section).

The same number of supply chain management faculty members will be needed through either program, meaning that additional faculty are not needed to make a transition from a concentration to a major. As demand for the program increases, additional faculty will be needed, but will be justified through enrollment growth.

The department and faculty already have access to needed technology and partnerships to access company data for class analysis. Additional resources are not needed for operational budgetary items.

### **Existing Programs Offered at Public and Private Tennessee Institutions**

University of Tennessee Knoxville offers two master's degrees in supply chain management. These degrees are cohort programs and they require some synchronous live class sessions. One of the programs at UTK requires students to live for a semester in Japan and Germany. The MTSU degree is designed for working adults who will mostly take the program on a part-time basis; it is offered totally online in format. The MTSU proposal is also totally asynchronous. University of Memphis also has some master's level offerings in supply chain. They offer an MBA with a supply chain concentration. The MTSU degree is SCM focused, while the UM program has a general business (MBA focus) with some courses in SCM. A review of other universities indicates that there are no master's level supply chain degrees offered at Belmont University, Vanderbilt University, Lipscomb University, Tennessee

State University, UT Chattanooga, Tennessee Tech University, UT Martin, or East Tennessee State University.

### Enrollment and Degrees Awarded by Concentration

For the last three years, enrollment rates in the Supply Chain concentration have exceeded benchmarks required for major programs. Fall Headcount Enrollment and Degrees Awarded for both Management (organization leadership and not-for profit concentrations) and Supply Chain concentration are documented in the following table. There is a clear upward trend to enrollment and graduation rates for the Supply Chain program.

	Fall Headcount Enrollment				Degrees Awarded			
	Fall 2018	Fall 2019	Fall 2020	3-Year Fall Average	AY 2018-19	AY 2019-20	AY 2020-21	3-Year Average
Management (Organization leadership concentration)	18	21	59	32.7	6	5	8	6.33
Management (Not for Profit Management Concentration)*	5	3	3	3.7	2	1	2	1.67
Management (SCM concentration)	14	17	36	22.3	4	8	6	6
Total	37	41	98	58.7	12	14	16	14

\*Not for Profit Concentration was made inactive in 2021

The SCM concentration has continued growth in fall 2021 with a total enrollment of 46 students in the SCM concentration; enrollment in concentrations excluding supply chain management was 84 students in fall 2021.) The retention rate from fall 2018 to fall 2019 shows that 82.4% of continuing students were retained. This indicates that the majority of students are continuing their studies to meet graduation requirements. Most students are part-time, so degree completion takes these students two or more years. With enrollment increases continuing along with a high student retention rate, the average number of degrees should increase in future years.

### Student Learning Outcomes

Following are the program learning outcomes for the proposed M.S. in Supply Chain Management:

1. Students will demonstrate the ability to determine appropriate tools needed to make decisions and will be able to analyze data and generate potential alternatives to SCM problems.

2. Students will demonstrate expertise in developing and using project management tools for planning, implementing, and assessing projects in their discipline.
3. Students will demonstrate knowledge and skills needed to manage a team in a supply chain environment.
4. Students will recognize the complex issues in sourcing and delivery options for global supply and will be able to think strategically about these issues.
5. Students will learn how SCM strategies and decisions impact other business functions in the organization and will develop skills to work with other functional areas to ensure effectiveness in company operations.

### **Assessment**

The university requires assessment of student learning outcomes through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) institutional effectiveness process. Specific learning outcomes for the proposed supply chain management M.S. degree will be operationalized through the development of benchmarks, rubrics, and skills assessment activities. Faculty will develop and test measures before finalizing the assessment process. Program learning outcomes will be completed on a routine basis, either yearly or every other year.

### **Accreditation**

The university is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). As noted above, the supply chain management M.S. will actively participate in the assessment required by SACS. Additionally, the Jennings A. Jones College of Business is accredited by AACSB International—The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business; the supply chain management M.S. will become one of the programs evaluated through the AACSB re-affirmation process.

### **Current and Proposed Curriculum Requirements**

The proposed curriculum for the M.S. in Supply Chain Management is listed in Attachment A—Comparison of Current & Proposed Curriculum.

Much of the curriculum for the M.S. in Management in Supply Chain Management will remain the same as the current M.S. in Management – Supply Chain Management concentration. Changes include more SCM content and these changes are easily visible in the Attachment.

### **New Courses Needed**

Three additional courses are being developed to elevate the concentration to an M.S. in Supply Chain Management. Courses are all electives for the program. These course additions will allow students to have course elective options in their direct professional Supply Chain professional interest. The courses are International Logistics and Transportation, Supply Chain Information Management, and Sourcing and Purchasing.

## Curriculum Crosswalk of Proposed Curriculum to Accreditation Competencies

Not Applicable.

### Distance Learning

This M.S. is designed to be offered totally online and in an asynchronous format. This offering allows full-time employees to complete the degree as they continue their work careers.

### Current and Proposed Admission, Retention and Graduation Policies

Compared to the current M.S. in Management – Supply Chain Management concentration, there will be no change in the admission or retention requirements in the stand-alone M.S. Supply Chain Management.

### Current Faculty

Name	Rank	Highest Degree	Primary Department	FTE in Program
Kimball Bullington	Professor	Ph.D.	Management	60%
Bryan Kethley	Professor	Ph.D.	Management	20 %
Tom Morgan	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.	Management	20%
Richard Tarpey	Assistant Professor	DBA	Management	20%
Cliff Welborn	Professor	Ph.D.	Management	60%

### Finance

Because the graduate Supply Chain Management concentration has existed at MTSU since fall of 2013, and because this is the elevation of a concentration to a stand-alone major, no changes in the current financial status are needed.

Attachment A

ATTACHMENT: Comparison of Before and After Curriculum – **PROPOSED M.S. in SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT**

<b>CURRENT CURRICULUM</b>	<b>Hours</b>	<b>PROPOSED CURRICULUM</b>	<b>Hours</b>
<b>Management Core Courses</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Supply Chain Major Core</b>	<b>18</b>
MGMT 6100 – Strategic Decision Making (3hrs)		MGMT 6760 - Continuous Improvement/Prob Solving (3 hrs)	
MGMT 6200 – Lean Project Management Principles (3 hrs)		MBAM 6875 - Supply Chain Operations (3 hrs)	
MGMT 6680 – Seminar in Human Resources Management (3 hrs)		MGMT 6200 - Lean Project Management Principles (3 hrs)	
MGMT 6750 – Business Ethics (3 hrs)		MGMT 6700 - Supply Chain Key Perf Indicators (3 hrs)	
MGMT 6800 – Applied Management Project (3 hrs)		MGMT 6730 - International Supply Chain Management (3hrs)	
		MGMT 6600 - Organization Behavior (3hrs)	
<b>Supply Chain Management Concentration</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Supply Chain Management Electives</b>	<b>9</b>
MGMT 6730 – International Supply Chain Management (3 hrs)		MGMT 6575 - International Logistics and Transportation (3 hrs)	
MGMT 6700 – Supply Chain Key Performance Indicators (3 hrs)		MGMT 6585 -Supply Chain Information Management (3 hrs)	
Choose two from the following:		MKT 6830 – Marketing Systems (3 hrs)	
MGMT 6550 – Distribution Center Management (3 hrs)		MGMT 6550 - Distribution Center Management (3 hrs)	
MGMT 6760 – Continuous Improvement/Problem Solving		MGMT 6800 - Applied Management Project (3 hrs)	
MKT 6830 – Marketing Systems (3 hrs)		MGMT 6250 - Healthcare Resource Management (3 hrs)	
MBAM 6875 – Supply Chain Operations (3 hrs)		MGMT 6450 - Healthcare Quality and Accountability (3 hrs)	
BIA 6905 – Applied Business Analytics (3 hrs)		BIA 6905 - Applied Business Analytics (3 hrs)	
		BIA 6910 - Business Intelligence (3 hrs)	
<b>Career Electives</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Career Electives</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED FOR DEGREE</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED FOR DEGREE</b>	<b>33</b>





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting  
DATE: April 5, 2022  
SUBJECT: **Approval of Honorary Degrees**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

University Policy 316, Awarding Honorary Degrees, states that the President must recommend nominees for honorary degrees to the Board of Trustees for approval.

An ad hoc committee of faculty, staff, and administrators has reviewed the nominations of Bill Haslam, former governor of the State of Tennessee, and Philip Edward 'Brave' Davis, QC, MP, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, to receive honorary degrees and has recommended them to President McPhee.

President McPhee recommends to the Board of Trustees Bill Haslam and Philip Edward 'Brave' Davis to receive honorary doctorate degrees at the May Commencement Ceremonies.







**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

SUBJECT: **Executive and Governance Committee**

DATE: April 5, 2022

PRESENTER: Steve Smith  
Committee Chair

- 
- Institutional Mission and Mission Profile
  - President's Contract





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **Institutional Mission and Mission Profile**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

T.C.A. §49-8-101(d) requires the institution to annually submit its institutional mission statement to THEC for review and approval. On February 11, 2022, the University Planning Committee approved proposed revisions to the University's mission statement and mission profile. Revisions to the mission statement add staff to students and faculty for full representation of the University community. Revisions to the institutional mission profile update the University's Carnegie classification and add research and public service center as well as co-curricular programs to the description of the University. Other textual changes are proposed for clarity.

Once approved by the Board at its April meeting, the University will present the mission statement and mission profile to THEC in fulfillment of this statutory requirement.



## Statement of Mission

Middle Tennessee State University, ~~embraces its role as~~ a comprehensive, innovative institution, ~~attracts students to whose~~ distinctive bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral programs ~~that~~ prepare graduates to thrive in their chosen professions and a changing global society. Students, ~~and~~ faculty, ~~and~~ staff generate, preserve, and disseminate knowledge and collaboratively promote excellence through teaching and learning, research, creative activity, and public engagement.

*Approved [date] by the MTSU Board of Trustees*

## Institutional Mission Profile

Middle Tennessee State University is a selective, comprehensive institution located in the geographic center of the State. The University embraces its role as the destination of choice for Tennessee undergraduates ~~while and~~ its distinctive ~~undergraduate and graduate~~ programs draw students from across the nation and around the world. ~~Through innovative undergraduate and graduate degree programs and research and public service centers, MTSU attracts, welcomes, and supports~~ a diverse, largely full-time student population with significant numbers of Pell-eligible, first-generation, non-traditional, and ~~minority underrepresented~~ students. ~~MTSU continues to be and is~~ the top Tennessee choice for transfer students. The University ~~is committed to using~~ uses advanced research-based practices to help students recognize their academic promise and achieve success, ~~it confers conferring~~ approximately 5,000 degrees annually. Dedicated faculty ~~and~~ staff prepare students for lifelong learning with global perspectives through an understanding of culture and history, scholarship, and creative undertakings to adapt to and shape a rapidly changing world. MTSU's signature Honors College, experiential and integrative learning, international, ~~and~~ cross-disciplinary, ~~and~~ co-curricular programs deliver a value-added education rich in research, service learning, and civic engagement. ~~Graduate Academic~~ offerings foster the pursuit of scholarly research, creative endeavors, and professional advancement through programs spanning the arts and humanities, education, business, STEM, the social, behavioral, and health sciences, and media and entertainment. MTSU houses centers of excellence in historic preservation and popular music and notable chairs of excellence. MTSU ~~is a Doctoral/Professional~~

~~University and holds the~~ has earned the Carnegie Doctoral University: High Research Activity and  
elective Community Engagement ~~Carnegie C~~classifications.

*Approved [date] by the MTSU Board of Trustees*

## Statement of Mission

Middle Tennessee State University embraces its role as a comprehensive, innovative institution whose distinctive bachelor's, master's, specialist, and doctoral programs prepare graduates to thrive in their chosen professions and a changing global society. Students, faculty, and staff generate, preserve, and disseminate knowledge and collaboratively promote excellence through teaching and learning, research, creative activity, and public engagement.

*Approved [date] by the MTSU Board of Trustees*

## Institutional Mission Profile

Middle Tennessee State University is a selective, comprehensive institution located in the geographic center of the State. The University embraces its role as the destination of choice for Tennessee undergraduates, and its distinctive undergraduate and graduate programs draw students from across the nation and around the world. Innovative degree programs and research and public service centers attract, welcome, and support a diverse, largely full-time student population with significant numbers of Pell-eligible, first-generation, non-traditional, and underrepresented students. MTSU continues to be the top Tennessee choice for transfer students. The University uses advanced research-based practices to help students recognize their academic promise and achieve success, conferring approximately 5,000 degrees annually. Dedicated faculty and staff prepare students for lifelong learning with global perspectives through an understanding of culture and history, scholarship, and creative undertakings to adapt to and shape a rapidly changing world. MTSU's signature Honors College, experiential and integrative learning, international, cross-disciplinary, and co-curricular programs deliver a value-added education rich in research, service learning, and civic engagement. Academic offerings foster the pursuit of scholarly research, creative endeavors, and professional advancement through programs spanning the arts and humanities, education, business, STEM, the social, behavioral, and health sciences, and media and entertainment. MTSU houses centers of excellence in historic preservation and popular music and notable chairs of excellence. MTSU has earned the Carnegie Doctoral University: High Research Activity and elective Community Engagement classifications.

*Approved [date] by the MTSU Board of Trustees*







**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **President's Contract**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Board of Trustees Policy – Selection, Evaluation and Retention of the President provides that the Board will set the terms and conditions of the president's appointment to include his/her contract. A proposal concerning Dr. McPhee's contract was presented to the Executive Committee and now being recommended to the full Board.





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

SUBJECT: **Finance and Personnel Committee**

DATE: April 5, 2022

PRESENTER: Joey Jacobs  
Committee Chair

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- Permanent Appointment of Assistant to the President for Community Engagement and Inclusion
- Approval of Policy Revision
  - a) Policy 611 – Financial Performance Review
- Capital Disclosures





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **Permanent Appointment of Assistant to the President  
for Community Engagement and Inclusion**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Policy 808 – Compensation Reporting and Approvals – requires the appointment and salary recommendation of Vice Presidents or other executives reporting directly to the President be approved by the Board of Trustees.

The attached recommendation to permanently appoint Dr. Monica Smith as Assistant to the President for Community Engagement and Inclusion, as well as the salary request included, falls under this approval requirement and is therefore being presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.




**Office of the President**

Middle Tennessee State University  
204 Cope Administration Building  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37132  
615-898-2622  
FAX: 615-898-2507



To: Mr. Steve Smith, Chairman, Middle Tennessee State University Board of Trustees  
Mr. Joey Jacobs, Committee Chairman of the Finance and Personnel Committee

From: Sidney A. McPhee   
President

Subject: Assistant to the President for Community Engagement and Inclusion

Date: March 3, 2022

I wish to recommend to the Board the appointment of Dr. Monica Smith as the Assistant to the President for Community Engagement and Inclusion.

After an extensive search, I believe Dr. Smith's knowledge and breadth of experience relative to the requirements and responsibilities of the position by far makes her the most qualified candidate for the position. I have included a copy of her resume for your review. I am recommending the appointment of Dr. Smith to the MTSU Board of Trustees with an annual salary of \$150,000 beginning April 6, 2022 and a moving allowance not to exceed \$5,000.

If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

c: Dr. Christy Sigler, Interim Assistant to the President for Institutional Equity and Compliance  
Mr. Alan Thomas, Vice President for Business and Finance  
Ms. Kathy Musselman, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources

Attachment

**Monica Smith, Ed.D.**  
Nashville, TN

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**Community Engagement Expert / Diversity Professional / Strategic Planner**

Professional Summary

Strategic thinking and project management

- Proven capacity to develop strategic plans that enhance organizational goals and bolster overall performance.
- Able to oversee multiple projects simultaneously and collaborate with leadership, colleagues, and other key stakeholders to create consensus and bring objectives to completion.

Leadership and teamwork

- Superior ability to generate and reinforce a positive working environment in which all team members are able to make meaningful contributions.
- Robust conflict management, leadership, and problem solving competence.

Engagement and communication

- Award-winning expertise in promoting community engagement, development of processes, and implementation of operational and business initiatives to bring positive institutional transformation.

Analysis and assessment

- Exceptional skills to develop and deliver organization-wide reports identifying key action areas along with recommendations to drive success.

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Career Experience

**Founder & President | 3/2015 – Present**  
**Transformational Ways, Nashville, TN**

Direct all aspects of the company while providing confidential executive coaching and management consultation on diversity and community engagement to enhance individual and organizational performance, locate solutions, and stimulate innovation.

**Director, Community Engagement & Service**  
**Miami University, Oxford, OH**

Designed and powered a strategic planning process to institutionalize and enhance community engagement and service-learning. Advanced the ongoing development and analysis of community engagement, systematizing processes and policies to safeguard the sustainability of community engagement.



**Senior Manager, Diversity Management & Ethics (Chief Diversity Officer)  
Marysville, OH**

Honda of America Manufacturing: Delivered strategic direction and supervised four business units: Government Contracting/EEO, Corporate Compliance and Ethics, Supplier Diversity, and Staffing Diversity through matrix to human resources. Served as senior corporate liaison to community leaders on diversity matters—local, state, regional, and national.

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**Additional Relevant Experience**

Executive Director (Dayton Region)| The National Conference for Community and Justice: Guided a financially distressed region of national organization to operational and programmatic stability.

Assistant Dean for Academic Diversity| Medical College of Ohio: Established an academic office to support long-term curricula revisions aligned with institutional diversity and cultural competence goals.

Director of Multicultural Affairs | University of Toledo: Directed operations and programming staffing to ensure consistent diverse educational opportunities on campus. Supervised campus diversity training and large-scale events and speakers.

Director of Multicultural Activities and Programs | Bowling Green State University: Supervised campus activities of all multicultural student organizations including Greek-letter organizations. Provided leadership and organizational training to those organizations.

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**Educational Background & Affiliations**

Doctor of Education with Distinction for Oral and Written Defense, Higher Education Management | University of Pennsylvania

Master of Arts in Applied Behavioral Science | Wright State University

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology | Wright State University





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **Approval of Policy Revision:  
Policy 611 – Financial Performance Review**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Policy 611 Financial Performance Review**

The financial health of the University is assessed using the Composite Financial Index (CFI). The policy revision provides that the CFI will no longer be submitted to the Board as an annual information item. Instead, individual ratios and overall CFI score will be compared with other LGIs and used to assess whether any budget changes need to be presented to the Board.

The individual ratios and overall composite score will also be submitted to external agencies as requested or required (i.e., U.S. Department of Education).

Copies of the redline policy and final revised policy are attached for your review and approval.





## 611 Financial Performance Review

Approved by Board of Trustees

Effective Date: ~~June 5, 2017~~ \_\_\_\_\_, 2022

Responsible Division: Business and Finance

Responsible Office: Business and Finance

Responsible Officer: Associate Vice President, Business and Finance

### I. Purpose

It is the policy of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) to have a sound financial base that demonstrates financial stability sufficient to support the mission of the University over the long term. A sound financial base and a pattern of financial stability provide the foundation for accomplishing the University's mission, regardless of changing economic conditions. Financial and physical resources should be managed in a manner that permits the University to fulfill its mission long term.

### II. Responsibility

The President, through the Vice President for Business and Finance, is responsible for administering and managing the University's financial affairs in such a manner as to ensure the University's current and future financial health. This policy establishes the tools used to assess the financial health of the University, the reporting process, and actions to be taken if the University shows signs of financial weakness.

### III. Background

- A. The analytical framework contained within this policy is derived from Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education; Identifying, Measuring & Reporting Financial Risks; Seventh Edition, published by KPMG; Prager, Sealy & Co., LLC; and ATTAIN. This framework and its primary metric, referred to as the Composite Financial Index (CFI), are widely used in the higher education community to understand the financial health of institutions. The methodology, ratios, and related benchmarks contained in this policy are taken from this publication.
- B. To determine the University's financial performance, four (4) questions are asked:
  1. Are resources sufficient and flexible enough to support its mission?

2. Does financial asset performance support the institution's strategic direction?
  3. Do operating results indicate the University is living within its available resources?
  4. Is debt managed strategically to advance its mission?
- C. To address these four (4) questions, data from the University's unaudited financial report are used to determine four (4) core financial ratios that are then combined into a single composite metric of financial condition, the CFI.

#### IV. Calculation of Core Ratios and CFI

All calculations include the financial results of the University's component unit (i.e., related foundation(s) noted as "CU") to present a comprehensive picture of the University's overall financial condition. The data source for calculation of each ratio is the University's unaudited annual financial report, with all calculations reflecting the results from a single year (i.e., no use of moving averages). The four (4) core financial ratios, including general descriptions, the calculation method, data sources, an expected performance standard, and a performance watch level, and a similar description of the calculation and interpretation of the CFI value, are as follows:

##### A. Return on Net Assets

1. Description. The return on net assets ratio measures total economic return during the fiscal year. This measure is similar to the return on equity ratio used in examining for-profit concerns and answers the questions, "Are they better off financially than they were a year ago?" and "Does financial asset performance support the strategic direction of the University?" While investments in plant, capital campaign, or poor stock market can all create year to year volatility in this measure, the trend over time should be positive. Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Change in Net Assets} + \text{CU Change in Net Assets}}{\text{Total Net Assets (beginning of year)} + \text{CU Total Net Assets (beginning of year)}}$$

2. Expected Performance Standard. The return on net assets ratio should be at least three percent (3%) above the rate of inflation. For example, if the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is at three percent (3%), a return on the net assets ratio of six percent (6%) is desirable.
3. Watch Level. Consistently below the rate of inflation. Anything below the rate of inflation indicates a reduction of the University's asset base in real dollars, thereby eroding the purchasing power of institutional resources for future generations.

## B. Net Operating Revenues Ratio

1. Description. The net operating revenues ratio indicates an operating surplus or deficit in the given fiscal year. A positive ratio indicates that the University experienced an operating surplus for the year. This ratio is similar to a profit margin and answers the questions, “Did they balance operating expenses with available revenue?” and “Do the operating results indicate that the University is living within available resources?” Depreciation expense is included to reflect the use of physical assets in measuring operating performance. Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Operating Income (Loss + Non-operating Revenues (Expenses) + CU Change in Unrestricted Net Assets)}}{\text{Operating Revenues + Non-operating Revenues + CU Total Unrestricted Revenue}}$$

2. Expected Performance Standard. A ratio of four percent (4%). This is considered adequate to keep pace with the growth in operating expenses and maintain reserves at acceptable levels.
3. Watch Level. Consistently below zero (0). A deficit in a single year does not necessarily indicate a problem, but deficits over several years are a cause for concern and suggest that the University’s mission cannot be sustained and institutional finances should be restructured.

## C. Primary Reserve Ratio

1. Description. The primary reserve ratio measures financial strength and flexibility by comparing expendable net assets to total expenses. This measure answers the question, “How long can the University survive without additional net assets generated by operating revenue?” Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Expendable Net Assets + CU Expendable Net Assets}}{\text{Total Expenses + CU Total Expenses}}$$

2. Expected Performance Standard. A ratio of 0.40 (representing about 5 [5] months of expenses) or higher. At this level, the University has the flexibility to manage minor financial disruptions and other unforeseen events with less need to immediately disrupt ongoing activities. At this level, the University can be expected to carry on a reasonable level of facilities maintenance activities.
3. Watch Level. A ratio of 0.133 (represents less than 1.5 months of expenses in ready assets) or less. The University at these levels has less operating flexibility to meet unexpected events, generally lacks sufficient resources to pursue strategic initiatives, and may struggle to invest in plant maintenance.

#### D. Viability Ratio

1. Description. The viability ratio measures the financial health of the University by comparing total expendable net assets to total current and non-current liabilities. This ratio is similar to a coverage ratio used in the private sector to indicate the ability of an organization to cover its long term debt from readily available resources and answers the questions, “How much of their debt can the University pay off with existing resources?” and “Is debt managed strategically to advance the University’s mission?” If the University has no debt, this ratio is ignored in the calculation of the CFI score. A ratio of 1.0 indicates the University has expendable resources sufficient to satisfy all outstanding plant related debt. Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Expendable Net Assets} + \text{CU Expendable Net Assets}}{\text{Plant Related Debt} + \text{CU Plant Related Debt}}$$

2. Expected Performance Standard. A ratio of 1.25 or higher (the higher the ratio, the stronger the credit-worthiness of the University). At these levels, the University has increased flexibility to address unexpended events.
3. Watch Level. A ratio of 0.41 or less. Similar to the primary reserve ratio watch level, the University at this level has decreased flexibility to respond to unforeseen events, essentially a reduced “margin of error” in the financial management of the University. Dropping below a ratio of 0.41 may identify the University as a credit risk.

#### V. Composite Financial Index (CFI)

- A. After their calculation, these four (4) ratios are combined to deliver a single measure of the overall financial health of the University. By blending these four (4) core financial ratios into one (1) metric, a more balanced view of the University’s finances is provided since weakness in one (1) measure can be offset by strength in another. Additionally, measuring the index over time provides a glimpse as to the progress the University is making toward achieving financial goals. CFI scores range from a low of -4.0 to a high of 10.0. The CFI is computed using a four (4)-step methodology:
  1. Computing the values of the core ratios as outlined above;
  2. Calculating strength factors by dividing the core ratios by threshold values;
  3. Multiplying the factors by specific weights; and
  4. Totaling the resulting scores to obtain the composite financial index.

With Outstanding Debt:



Core Ratio Value		Threshold Value		Strength Value		Weight		Score
Return on Net Assets	/	0.020	=	0.00	x	20%	=	0.00
Net Operating Revenues	/	0.013	=	0.00	x	10%	=	0.00
Primary Reserve	/	0.133	=	0.00	x	35%	=	0.00
Viability	/	0.417	=	0.00	x	35%	=	0.00
<b>Composite Financial Index Score</b>							=	<b>0.00</b>

- B. Expected Performance Standard. A score of at least 3.0. Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education indicates that at this level the University is relatively financially healthy in that sufficient liquid resources exist to meeting unforeseen circumstances, net operating revenues are adequate, expendable net assets exceed the level of debt, and the return on net assets is reasonable.
- C. Watch Level: A score of 1.0 or less. Again, Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education suggest that scores of 1.0 or below call into question the University's ability to carry out existing programs and survive.

## VI. Review Periods

While it is important to review annual results, these results should be placed in context by reviewing longer terms trends. By focusing on three (3) to five (5) year trends, the long term financial health of the University may be better ascertained.

## VII. Process for Reporting

- A. After completion of published financial statements, the Vice President for Business and Finance shall be responsible for calculation of the University's core ratios and CFI score, ~~and submission of this information to the Board of Trustees (Board). As part of this submission, the Vice President for Business and Finance shall provide a narrative that explains the factors underlying changes in ratio values and CFI scores from the prior year, and whether these factors were planned or unexpected. If watch level performance is evidenced on any indicator, the submission shall also address what action the University plans to take to improve the ratio or score in subsequent years.~~

The individual ratios and overall CFI score will be shared with the other Locally Governed Institutions (LGIs) for creating averages of each metric for comparison purposes. The President and Vice President for Business and Finance will discuss the metrics annually to determine if any changes are needed in the University's budget. These changes, along with the metrics requiring the changes, will be reported to the Board of Trustees with the next budget submission.

- B. ~~The Board shall review the University's annual submissions. For any measure that evidences watch level performance, the Board will review with the President the adequacy of the University's plan to address the issue. If the CFI watch level criteria specified in this policy is met, additional information may be requested by the Board. The individual ratios and overall composite score will also be submitted to external agencies as requested or required (i.e., U.S. Department of Education).~~

Forms: none.

Revisions: June 5, 2017 (original); \_\_\_\_\_, 2022~~none.~~

Last Reviewed: ~~November 2020~~ \_\_\_\_\_ 2022.

References: none.



## **611 Financial Performance Review**

**Approved by Board of Trustees**

**Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_, 2022**

**Responsible Division: Business and Finance**

**Responsible Office: Business and Finance**

**Responsible Officer: Associate Vice President, Business and Finance**

### **I. Purpose**

It is the policy of Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU or University) to have a sound financial base that demonstrates financial stability sufficient to support the mission of the University over the long term. A sound financial base and a pattern of financial stability provide the foundation for accomplishing the University's mission, regardless of changing economic conditions. Financial and physical resources should be managed in a manner that permits the University to fulfill its mission long term.

### **II. Responsibility**

The President, through the Vice President for Business and Finance, is responsible for administering and managing the University's financial affairs in such a manner as to ensure the University's current and future financial health. This policy establishes the tools used to assess the financial health of the University, the reporting process, and actions to be taken if the University shows signs of financial weakness.

### **III. Background**

- A. The analytical framework contained within this policy is derived from Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education; Identifying, Measuring & Reporting Financial Risks; Seventh Edition, published by KPMG; Prager, Sealy & Co., LLC; and ATTAIN. This framework and its primary metric, referred to as the Composite Financial Index (CFI), are widely used in the higher education community to understand the financial health of institutions. The methodology, ratios, and related benchmarks contained in this policy are taken from this publication.
- B. To determine the University's financial performance, four (4) questions are asked:
  1. Are resources sufficient and flexible enough to support its mission?

2. Does financial asset performance support the institution's strategic direction?
  3. Do operating results indicate the University is living within its available resources?
  4. Is debt managed strategically to advance its mission?
- C. To address these four (4) questions, data from the University's unaudited financial report are used to determine four (4) core financial ratios that are then combined into a single composite metric of financial condition, the CFI.

#### IV. Calculation of Core Ratios and CFI

All calculations include the financial results of the University's component unit (i.e., related foundation(s) noted as "CU") to present a comprehensive picture of the University's overall financial condition. The data source for calculation of each ratio is the University's unaudited annual financial report, with all calculations reflecting the results from a single year (i.e., no use of moving averages). The four (4) core financial ratios, including general descriptions, the calculation method, data sources, an expected performance standard, and a performance watch level, and a similar description of the calculation and interpretation of the CFI value, are as follows:

##### A. Return on Net Assets

1. Description. The return on net assets ratio measures total economic return during the fiscal year. This measure is similar to the return on equity ratio used in examining for-profit concerns and answers the questions, "Are they better off financially than they were a year ago?" and "Does financial asset performance support the strategic direction of the University?" While investments in plant, capital campaign, or poor stock market can all create year to year volatility in this measure, the trend over time should be positive. Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Change in Net Assets} + \text{CU Change in Net Assets}}{\text{Total Net Assets (beginning of year)} + \text{CU Total Net Assets (beginning of year)}}$$

2. Expected Performance Standard. The return on net assets ratio should be at least three percent (3%) above the rate of inflation. For example, if the Consumer Price Index (CPI) is at three percent (3%), a return on the net assets ratio of six percent (6%) is desirable.
3. Watch Level. Consistently below the rate of inflation. Anything below the rate of inflation indicates a reduction of the University's asset base in real dollars, thereby eroding the purchasing power of institutional resources for future generations.

## B. Net Operating Revenues Ratio

1. Description. The net operating revenues ratio indicates an operating surplus or deficit in the given fiscal year. A positive ratio indicates that the University experienced an operating surplus for the year. This ratio is similar to a profit margin and answers the questions, “Did they balance operating expenses with available revenue?” and “Do the operating results indicate that the University is living within available resources?” Depreciation expense is included to reflect the use of physical assets in measuring operating performance. Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Operating Income (Loss + Non-operating Revenues (Expenses) + CU Change in Unrestricted Net Assets)}}{\text{Operating Revenues + Non-operating Revenues + CU Total Unrestricted Revenue}}$$

2. Expected Performance Standard. A ratio of four percent (4%). This is considered adequate to keep pace with the growth in operating expenses and maintain reserves at acceptable levels.
3. Watch Level. Consistently below zero (0). A deficit in a single year does not necessarily indicate a problem, but deficits over several years are a cause for concern and suggest that the University’s mission cannot be sustained and institutional finances should be restructured.

## C. Primary Reserve Ratio

1. Description. The primary reserve ratio measures financial strength and flexibility by comparing expendable net assets to total expenses. This measure answers the question, “How long can the University survive without additional net assets generated by operating revenue?” Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Expendable Net Assets + CU Expendable Net Assets}}{\text{Total Expenses + CU Total Expenses}}$$

2. Expected Performance Standard. A ratio of 0.40 (representing about 5 [5] months of expenses) or higher. At this level, the University has the flexibility to manage minor financial disruptions and other unforeseen events with less need to immediately disrupt ongoing activities. At this level, the University can be expected to carry on a reasonable level of facilities maintenance activities.
3. Watch Level. A ratio of 0.133 (represents less than 1.5 months of expenses in ready assets) or less. The University at these levels has less operating flexibility to meet unexpected events, generally lacks sufficient resources to pursue strategic initiatives, and may struggle to invest in plant maintenance.

#### D. Viability Ratio

1. Description. The viability ratio measures the financial health of the University by comparing total expendable net assets to total current and non-current liabilities. This ratio is similar to a coverage ratio used in the private sector to indicate the ability of an organization to cover its long term debt from readily available resources and answers the questions, “How much of their debt can the University pay off with existing resources?” and “Is debt managed strategically to advance the University's mission?” If the University has no debt, this ratio is ignored in the calculation of the CFI score. A ratio of 1.0 indicates the University has expendable resources sufficient to satisfy all outstanding plant related debt. Calculation:

$$\frac{\text{Expendable Net Assets} + \text{CU Expendable Net Assets}}{\text{Plant Related Debt} + \text{CU Plant Related Debt}}$$

2. Expected Performance Standard. A ratio of 1.25 or higher (the higher the ratio, the stronger the credit-worthiness of the University). At these levels, the University has increased flexibility to address unexpended events.
3. Watch Level. A ratio of 0.41 or less. Similar to the primary reserve ratio watch level, the University at this level has decreased flexibility to respond to unforeseen events, essentially a reduced “margin of error” in the financial management of the University. Dropping below a ratio of 0.41 may identify the University as a credit risk.

#### V. Composite Financial Index (CFI)

- A. After their calculation, these four (4) ratios are combined to deliver a single measure of the overall financial health of the University. By blending these four (4) core financial ratios into one (1) metric, a more balanced view of the University's finances is provided since weakness in one (1) measure can be offset by strength in another. Additionally, measuring the index over time provides a glimpse as to the progress the University is making toward achieving financial goals. CFI scores range from a low of -4.0 to a high of 10.0. The CFI is computed using a four (4)-step methodology:
  1. Computing the values of the core ratios as outlined above;
  2. Calculating strength factors by dividing the core ratios by threshold values;
  3. Multiplying the factors by specific weights; and
  4. Totaling the resulting scores to obtain the composite financial index.

With Outstanding Debt:

Core Ratio Value		Threshold Value		Strength Value		Weight		Score
Return on Net Assets	/	0.020	=	0.00	x	20%	=	0.00
Net Operating Revenues	/	0.013	=	0.00	x	10%	=	0.00
Primary Reserve	/	0.133	=	0.00	x	35%	=	0.00
Viability	/	0.417	=	0.00	x	35%	=	0.00
<b>Composite Financial Index Score</b>							=	<b>0.00</b>

- B. Expected Performance Standard. A score of at least 3.0. Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education indicates that at this level the University is relatively financially healthy in that sufficient liquid resources exist to meeting unforeseen circumstances, net operating revenues are adequate, expendable net assets exceed the level of debt, and the return on net assets is reasonable.
- C. Watch Level: A score of 1.0 or less. Again, Strategic Financial Analysis for Higher Education suggest that scores of 1.0 or below call into question the University's ability to carry out existing programs and survive.

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## VII. Process for Reporting

- A. After completion of published financial statements, the Vice President for Business and Finance shall be responsible for calculation of the University's core ratios and CFI score. The individual ratios and overall CFI score will be shared with the other Locally Governed Institutions (LGIs) for creating averages of each metric for comparison purposes. The President and Vice President for Business and Finance will discuss the metrics annually to determine if any changes are needed in the University's budget. These changes, along with the metrics requiring the changes, will be reported to the Board of Trustees with the next budget submission.

- B. The individual ratios and overall composite score will also be submitted to external agencies as requested or required (i.e., U.S. Department of Education).

Forms: none.

Revisions: June 5, 2017 (original); \_\_\_\_\_, 2022.

Last Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ 2022.

References: none.





**Middle Tennessee State University  
Board of Trustees**

**Action Item**

MEETING: Spring Quarterly Board Meeting

DATE: April 5, 2022

SUBJECT: **Capital Disclosures**

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Capital Disclosures**

In accordance with THEC Policy 4.0.6C, concerning disclosure of projects funded through bonds, gifts, grants or local funds, disclosure of a capital project to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is the first step in the project approval process and indicates an institution is considering a large-scale project investment, but does not obligate the University to carry out the work identified.

On February 9, MTSU had the opportunity to amend the MTSU FY 21/22 Capital Disclosure list via the quarterly disclosure process with a new disclosure for the Phillips Bookstore Improvements project. This gift-in-place project is provided by Barnes and Noble College and includes new retail layout and seating area for the bookstore. This disclosure will allow the work to be carried out over the summer of 2022. Included in the materials is the full MTSU disclosed project list as it will appear on April 1, 2022.



## Full MTSU Capital Disclosure List

Capital Disclosure List as it will appear April 1, 2022 with the FY 21/22 Quarter 4 amendment:

Project	Project Description	Disclosure Year	Project Cost	Funding Sources			
				Gifts	Gift-in-Place	Plant Funds	TSSBA Bonds
<b>Phillips Bookstore Improvements</b>	Renovations to the Phillip Bookstore including new retail displays, seating area, and all related work. The design and construction is to be carried out as a gift-in-place project from Barnes and Noble College, who is the contract holder for the Phillip Bookstore.	FY 21/24 Q4	\$ 350,000		\$ 350,000		
<b>New Student Housing</b>	Provide new student housing including dorm rooms, common areas, and support spaces. The project will contain a minimum of 500 beds. The project will be located on part of the existing Womack Lane housing complex. The project scope also includes partial demolition and abatement of the Womack Lane housing complex and associated infrastructure, site development, utilities, and all associated work.	FY 21/22	\$ 63,200,000				\$ 63,200,000
<b>Student Athlete Performance Center</b>	This disclosure to replace the "Football Operations Facility" disclosed in FY 19/20. Provide a new Student Athlete Performance Center Building including athletic offices, locker rooms, training areas, football operations, and support spaces. The project scope also contains required site development including parking improvements and site utilities. To facilitate desired location of the building, relocating the Murphy Center loading dock and demolition of the upper deck on the north side of Floyd Stadium is required.	FY 21/22	\$ 66,000,000	\$ 5,000,000			\$ 61,000,000
<b>Athletic Video Board Upgrades</b>	Replace video board, related audio systems, and control boards at Floyd Stadium and the Murphy Center that are at the end of their useful life.	FY 21/22	\$ 3,900,000				\$ 3,900,000
<b>Parking Structure</b>	Construct parking deck and associated site work.	FY 21/22	\$ 22,800,000				\$ 22,800,000
<b>Aerospace Instructional Center</b>	Construct a new academic building and site improvements to support the MTSU Department of Aerospace. This disclosure is to amend/replace the "New Flight School Academic Building" disclosed in FY 2020/2021.	FY 21/22	\$ 5,000,000			\$ 5,000,000	
<b>Tennis Facility Improvements</b>	Demolition and construction of new tennis courts, seating, and support facilities. This disclosure is to revise and replace the "Tennis Facility Improvements" project disclosed in FY 2020/2021.	FY 21/22	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 1,000,000		\$ 1,500,000	\$ 2,500,000
<b>Campus Quadrangle</b>	Site Improvements in the central campus quadrangle, including sidewalks lighting, landscaping, grading, drainage, and related work.	FY 22/23	\$ 2,020,000			\$ 2,020,000	

