

**AN UPDATED VISION FOR THE FUTURE:
MASTER PLAN FOR THE HONORS COLLEGE, 2019-2029**

Submitted 2019



**MIDDLE
TENNESSEE**
STATE UNIVERSITY

Outline of Report

Part I: Background

History
Honors Requirements and Curriculum
Special Events
Enrollment and Graduation Trends
University and Alumni Support

Part II: Current Goals and Mission

Goals
Special Focus

Part III: Current Status of MTSU's Honor College: NCHC Standards

Standard # 1
Compliance #1

Standard #2
Compliance #2

Standard #3
Compliance #3

Standard #4
Compliance #4

Standard #5
Compliance #5

Standard #6
Compliance #6

Standard #7
Compliance #7

Standard #8
Compliance #8

Standard #9
Compliance #9

Standard #10
Compliance #10

Standard #11
Compliance #11

Coda

Part IV: The University and the Honors College

Reasons for Optimism
A Reciprocal Relationship

Part V: The Road Ahead

The Evolution of this Report

Reviewing the Last Master Plan

Years 1 and 2: 2009-2011

- Increase Off-Campus Publicity About the Honors College
- Raise Monies for Scholarship Shortfall in 2009-10
- Increase the Number of Honors Graduates
- Implement a Top Transfer Program to Increase Honors Transfers from Community Colleges
- Strengthen Emphasis on Leadership
- Hire a Fund-Raising Coordinator
- Assist in Publication of Books Related to Honors College
- Obtain Better Information about the Success of Honors Graduates
- Examine the Creation of Language Hallways in Lyon Hall
- Implement an Additional Scholarship Program
- Be more proactive in informing students of campus resources for dealing with mental health and wellness.

Years 3 through 5: 2011-2014

- Hire Additional Coordinator
- Expand *Collage* Literary Magazine
- Establish Endowed Professorships and/or Joint Faculty Appointments
- Establish Exchanges with other Honors Colleges

Years 6 through 10: 2014-2019

Reconsider Honors Baseline for Admission
Establish Sister Institution for Foreign Exchange
Construct a New Living-Learning Center Adjacent to the College

Other Accomplishments

Goals for the Next 10 Years

Continuing Goals for all 10 Years

Other More Specific Goals and Years of Implementation

Years 1 and 2: 2019-2021

Strengthen Recent Honors Ambassadorial Program
Sponsor a Major Conference to Honor the Legacy of Dr. James Buchanan
Create Summer Research Opportunities for Students Interested in Public Policy Issues
Increase the Number of Dual Enrollment Honors Classes
Hire Residential Economist
See an Additional Advisor/Recruiter for the Honors College
Hire a Faculty Member to Help with Honors Theses
Seek Increased Support for Honors Transfer Fellows
Examine providing greater funding for out-of-state Buchanan students
Participate in NSSE Honors Consortium (Pilot) in Spring 2019
Put Special Emphasis on the Spring ODK Initiation
Consider a 10-year celebration in the Spring of 2021 of the first Buchanan Graduating Class
Increase the Number of Applicants for Honors Transfer Fellowships
Create a Regularized Schedule of Study Abroad and Study Away Programs
Formulate Guidelines for New Resident Faculty Members
Continue to Cultivate Positive Relationships with Community Colleges to Increase the Number of Transfer and Qualified Applicants for the Honors Transfer Fellowship.
Be More Proactive in Informing Students of Campus Resources for Dealing with Mental Health and Welfare.
Increase the Number of Student Presentations
Implement National Student Exchange

Years 3-6, 2021-2024

Rethink Current Buchanan Program
Hold Special Celebration to Mark 50th Anniversary of Honors Program

Work with the College of Business to Renew the Joint Grant that Supports
Residential Economist and Student Research
Review Recruitment Efforts Among Special Groups
Consider Dividing Responsibilities for National and International
Fellowships
Promote and Support Student and Faculty Activity at the National
Collegiate Honors Council and other Scholarly Activities.

Years 7-10, 2024-2029

Seek Honors Housing Facility Closer to the Honors College Building
Seek Individuals for Whom Honors College, Like Current Building, May
Be Named
Create a Four-Year, Full-Tuition Scholarship for One or More
International Students

Appendices

Enrollments in Honors College
Number of Theses and Creative Projects
Chart of Honors Advising
Chart of Recruitment Activities
Chart of Scholarship Applications and Awards

Part I: Background

History

In March 2009, the Honors College submitted a plan entitled A Vision for the Future, which was intended to serve as a master plan through 2019. As this date has arrived, the College once again looks forward to the next decade with an even longer history from which to draw.

Honors was established as a program at MTSU in 1973 and became home to the first honors college at a Tennessee state institution in 1998. The Honors College moved into a 21,000 square foot building in 2004, which began with a generous donation from the College's first honors graduate, Paul Martin, and his brother, Lee, which other contributors matched.

For many years Honors Students were housed in two nearby residences, Wood and Felder Halls, which had not been updated for some time. Shortly before the adoption of the last Honors Master Plan, Lyon Hall, which is located on the historic part of campus, was refurbished to include numerous amenities. It began serving in the fall of 2008 as the new residence hall for honors students and remains noted as one of the quietest and most study-friendly residence halls on campus.

In 2007, not long before the last master plan, the College inaugurated the Buchanan Fellows Program to replace an earlier program, with no common curricular requirements and a modest stipend. The revised program, named after Dr. James M. Buchanan, an MTSU graduate who received a Nobel Prize in Economics, accepts 20 incoming students each year, who agree to take several classes in common, and it pays their full tuition and fees and a book allowance of \$1,000 a year as long as they continue to meet Honors College requirements and make satisfactory progress toward an honors degree. Largely because Dr. Buchanan left the University \$2.5 million, later supplemented with an additional \$1.2 million gift, the College now also guarantees that all participants will receive at least \$2,500 during their years at MTSU, which they may apply to study abroad, participation in scholars conferences, and other academic activities.

The most notable change since the last master plan has probably been the addition of the Honors Transfer Fellowship, which began in 2013. It provides \$3,500 a semester for up to four semesters for incoming in-state transfer students (\$7,000 for out-of-state transfers) who agree to take honors classes and to pursue either an Honors degree or an Honors Associate, which is open to those who arrive with no Honors credit. Initially limited to 15 incoming students, who take a common class designed to improve their research skills, with the endorsement of President Sidney McPhee, this was expanded in 2017 to respond

to the Tennessee Promise initiative (providing free community college educations for all Tennessee students) to include 30 students.

At the time of the last master plan, the College was publishing an award-winning semi-annual newsletter, the *Honors Edition*, and an award-winning semi-annual literary magazine, the *Collage*. The former now continues as a biannual magazine, recently renamed *Arete*. In 2016, it received the award as the top honors magazine in the nation. *Collage* also continues as a semi-annual literary magazine and continues to garner awards.

In 2010, the College also agreed to assume responsibility for an on-line magazine *Scientia*, which had largely fallen dormant, and it published its eighth annual print volume, which is also on-line, in 2018. This publication has been renamed *Scientia et Humanitas*, to reflect its broader subject matter, and, in an effort to encourage submissions, the Deans annually acknowledge the top articles within both the sciences and the humanities.

The College no longer sponsors an Honors Student Association, in which interest lagged, but it involves students in community service through activities connected to Omicron Delta Kappa, which the College helped to establish in 2010, and through Phi Kappa Phi, with which it has long been associated. The College continues to look for opportunities for students to present scholarly research.

The current full-time staff of the College includes an Honors Dean, Dr. John R. Vile, an Associate Dean, Dr. Philip Phillips, and two administrative assistants, Ms. Kathy Davis and Ms. Karen Demonbreum (who is retiring and whose replacement is now being sought), all of whom work from the main office suite. Three other staffers have offices on the same hall. Ms. Susan Lyons has replaced Georgia Dennis as the event scheduler and coordinator; Ms. Marsha Powers continues to coordinate the newsmagazine, literary magazine, and *Scientia et Humanitas* and takes care of the Honors College library.

Ms. Laura Clippard remains an advisor for Buchanan Fellows and heads the Undergraduate Fellowships Office, which has established a stellar record of recruiting students for Fulbright, Gilman, Critical Language Studies Scholarships and Research Experiences for Undergraduates. Ms. April Goers works as a part-time advisor and Ms. Judy Albakry as a full-time advisor, with the former working chiefly with freshmen and the latter taking over advising responsibilities for the Honors Transfer Fellows and advising sophomores, juniors, and seniors. The latter additions were made possible by University-wide initiatives giving increased focus to increasing progression and retention. Both the two full-time and one part-time advisors help with recruiting. Mr. Paul Wydra in the Foundation Office is also helping with fund-raising.

Dr. Mary Evins, who heads the American Democracy Project, Dr. Shelley Thomas, who heads the Center for Accelerated Language Acquisition (CALA),

and Dr. Robert Kalwinsky, who recently replaced Dr. Kaylene Gebert, a former university provost, are all residential honors faculty who retain offices within the building. Within the next year, the College anticipates housing an additional Economics professors whose position is being financed with a grant that the College helped secure in partnership with the Jones College of Business, with which the College partners each May to offer an Institute for Leadership Excellence. For two years, the College housed a biology professor, Dr. Drew Sieg, who was the first to introduce dual enrollment honors classes in a local high school. The College currently anticipates housing Mr. Ken Paulson, current Dean of the College of Media and Entertainment, who will be leading the First Amendment Center.

In 2015, the Honors College appointed a new Board of Visitors, which continues to include each of the past four Honors directors and deans. The yearly meetings have been a time to highlight student achievements and consult about future directions. The College sends each member all issues of its three existing publications as well as invitations to the lecture series that are held each fall and spring semester.

In addition, the College has an Honors Council, consisting of representative Honors faculty and students. Its members meet once or twice each regular semester to accept new honors faculty, oversee the curriculum, and help sit on thesis committees.

Since its founding in 1973, five individuals, all from different academic disciplines, have overseen the growth of the Honors College. They are Dr. June McCash (Foreign Languages), Dr. Ron Messier (History), Dr. John Paul Montgomery (English), Dr. Philip Mathis (Biology), and Dr. John R. Vile (Political Science). All of the deans have had reputations as teacher/scholars and have been active in the National Collegiate Honors Council.

Honors Requirements and Curriculum

Honors criteria remain the same as they were at the time of the last evaluation. The Honors College is open to incoming students with a 3.5 grade point average and a score of 25 or higher on the ACT exam or equivalent SAT scores (1160). Once students have enrolled and completed 12 or more hours of college credit, they may qualify to take honors classes if they have a 3.25 grade point average or better. Students must meet this same requirement to continue to enroll in honors classes.

Students may graduate with Honors in any major. In order to do so, students must complete 29 semester hours of Honors classes. These include 18 hours of lower-division Honors courses and eleven hours of upper division classes. The latter includes four hours of upper-division Honors courses; a three-hour Honors interdisciplinary seminar; a one-hour Honors Thesis Tutorial; and

three hours of Honors Independent Research (the Honors thesis). Faced with federal rules that cut off money for all courses that do not fit within a distinct course of study, this program was recently changed to a minor. There is a separate minor for Honors Associates who complete their last 11 honors with us, and another specifically tailored to Buchanan Fellows.

To promote student-faculty interaction, the Honors College caps enrollments in lower-division Honors classes at 20 students, and upper-division classes (other than the honors lecture series) at 15. Upper-division students may also convert one or two regular three-hour classes into an Honors option class by entering into a special agreement with their professors and the Honors College as to how their experience in such a class will be enhanced.

Professors design Honors classes to be challenging, but the goal is not to make classes more difficult but to increase student-faculty interaction and participation. Honors students who filled out surveys for this report indicated high levels of satisfaction with the teaching and learning that they were experiencing in their Honors classes. An increasing number of Honors students are participating in study-abroad programs. In the spring of 2017, the Honors College initiated a trip over spring break to historic sites in Virginia and Washington, D.C. in which 25 students participated. In January 2018, the College initiated its first trip to Thailand (17 students participating) after sponsoring two previous summer trips to Italy.

Largely due to the work of the Undergraduate Fellowship Office, Honors students have over the past few years been awarded an increased number of Goldwater, Phi Kappa Phi, Boren, Critical Language, Udall, and Fulbright scholarships. Honors graduates have been accepted into graduate and professional programs at the California Institute of Technology, the Harvard Medical School, the Law School at the University of Chicago and other prominent institutions of higher learning and have made important contributions to their professions.

Special Events

Partly through the American Democracy Project, the College continues to sponsor special programs and speakers. In 2017, it cohosted a program for Constitution Week involving a number of prominent Tennessee judges. The Dean now chairs the committee that helps choose the common reading for freshmen, the author of which comes to campus. In 2017, the Associate Dean and a graduate student worked with a local retired pediatrician/book collector, and the Walker Library to present an exhibit on the works of Eudora Welty. This resulted in the publication of a book of about 85 pages and a gift of the collection to the James Walker Library.

The College continues to sponsor its interdisciplinary lecture series, which features lectures once a week, on a topic of contemporary interest. Two of these programs, one connected to the University's centennial and another on prison writings, have resulted in published books.

The College holds numerous workshops on fellowship opportunities. One of the most successful such events in 2017 took place in the new science building and featured several students who told of their experiences at Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs).

In part because of its stellar facilities, the Honors College also regularly hosts visits by groups that are interested in MTSU in general and in the Honors College in particular. High school students and their parents are encouraged to stop by the Honors College for visits, and the Honors advisor and/or the Dean or Associate Dean makes an effort to meet them. One of the College's most successful programs is the annual President's Day Event. The day begins with breakfast for those who have been invited to be Buchanan Fellows and continues with events throughout the campus. The 2018 event was held in conjunction with a special event at the President's house.

Each year the College hosts a visiting artist who resides on campus for a week, teaches an intensive seminar for Honors students for credit, and participates in a public performance or exhibition. In part because this is typically scheduled in the middle of a regular semester, recruiting sufficient students for this event continues to be a challenge, but the 2019 class, which will be directed by former Honors Director, Dr. June McCash, is already full.

Enrollment and Graduation Trends

In the fall of 2008, the Honors College enrolled 656 students in the fall and filled 1067 seats. This number has continued a fairly steady rise to 878 students and 1291 seats in the fall of 2016. Over the past few years, the Honors College has reached out to encourage departments with limited offerings to increase them.

The most noticeable trend, and arguably the most important, has been the steady increase in the number of theses, brought about in part by the Buchanan and Honors Transfer Scholarships, for whom a thesis is obligatory. From a low of seven students who successfully defended theses in 2003 to 2004, to 26 in the 2007-8 year, to 73 students in 2016-2017 year, and 82 in 2017-2018, numbers have increased almost every year. This has presented both scheduling problems and workload problems for the Dean and Associate Dean, who currently split the reading and defenses of all thesis proposals and all theses between them. In addition to keeping theses in the Honors library, theses are now also posted online for students who agree to this.

After the number of Buchanan applications approached 300, the criteria for application was increased from a minimum 25 ACT score to a minimum 29. In 2016, however, the number of applicants approached 275, and with the transition to online applications, this year's total was 343 students. The College has decided to increase the minimum ACT from 29 to 30, partly to make selection easier but largely so that this scholarship will be in line with the current requirement for the Trustees' Scholarship. The College remains in discussion as to whether to increase either the minimum grades or test scores still further, but believes that the written aspect of the application should continue to seek students who are engaged in public service and/or whom have shown their meddle by overcoming significant hurdles.

University and Alumni Support

Perhaps as much as any academic unit on the MTSU campus, the Honors College depends on the support of others. The very building in which the Honors College is housed was the dream of its alumni, and students receive continuing scholarship support both from the University and from alumni donations.

The College has been especially blessed to have had consistent support from its own alumni and from the MTSU Administration. President Mel Scarlett helped bring the program to campus, and every subsequent president has nurtured it.

One of the first and most important initiatives of current President Dr. Sidney A. McPhee was helping to raise the money needed to match the gift for construction of the Honors Building, which was given by the first graduate of the Honors College, Paul Martin, and his brother, Lee. Dr. McPhee has enthusiastically supported the Buchanan and Honors Transfer Fellowships.

University Provosts, including current Provost, Dr. Mark Byrnes, have also supported the Honors College as have deans and department chairs who regularly supply faculty for honors courses. Alumni continue to make contributions and to serve on the Honors Board of Visitors. As long as the College continues to receive such support, it is likely to remain the University's "crown jewel" that the president often describes it as being.

Part II: Current Goals and Mission

Goals

The mission of the Honors College remains: “to provide undergraduate education of exceptional quality to a small but diverse student population having a deep commitment to scholarship and to the ideas and virtues engraved on the north façade of the Paul W. Martin Sr. Honors Building: ‘honor, commitment, integrity, discipline, faith, curiosity, character, and creativity.’”

The latest MTSU Academic Master Plan, *The Reach to Distinction*, which was overseen by Associate Dean Philip Phillips, identifies three goals to which the University as a whole is committed. These are:

Goal 1. Middle Tennessee State University will **advance academic quality** through excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service and the celebration of MTSU’s distinctive strengths.

Goal 2. Middle Tennessee State University will **promote student success** and individual responsibility for accomplishments through a community dedicated to student-centered learning.

Goal 3. Middle Tennessee State University will **develop** purposeful and sustainable partnering **relationships and outreach**.

Special Focus

These goals are further tied to three strategic directions. These involve **promoting engagement, fostering academic community** and **innovating for effectiveness and efficiency**. In recent years, MTSU has been strongly committed to the Quest for Student Success, which chiefly focused on recruiting, retaining, progressing, and graduating students. Honors students score high on all of these metrics, and there is a tie between the record ACT scores of MTSU’s incoming freshmen and the continuing success of the Honors college.

Honors College literature, and members of the Honors Board of Visitors, reiterate the College’s desire to present an Ivy League or Public Ivy (a selective publicly-supported institution) education at a public institution. The enhanced opportunities that the MTSU Honors College offers will help Tennessee to retain many of its finest graduates within the state.

As noted in the Honors College's last Master Plan, the 2008 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which is administered by the Indiana University Center for Post-secondary Research and partly sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, reported that "student experiences and outcomes are more varied among students within institutions than among institutions (p. 6)." Specifically, the report found that "for almost all of the benchmarks, less than 10% of the total variation in effective educational practices is attributable to institutions. The lion's share of the variation is among students, within institutions (p. 7)."

The success of Honors students and graduates suggests that these students are among those who are getting maximum benefits from their educations at MTSU. Students in the Honors College have won Goldwater, Fulbright, and Phi Kappa Phi scholarships. Honors students tend to graduate at much higher rates than others. Many have been admitted to prestigious professional and graduate programs. Evidence from other institutions suggests that Honors students are more likely to maintain ties with, and contribute to, the institutions from which they graduate than other alumni.

Future success of the Honors College will require continuing alumni support. It will also require the same kind of commitment, promotion, University support, and long-range vision that fueled past achievements.

Part III: Current Status of MTSU’s Honors College: NCHC Standards

The National Collegiate Honors Council publishes “Basic Characteristics of a Fully Developed Honors College,” which also encapsulates criteria for fully developed honors programs. These guidelines have been published in Appendix B of the NCHC Monograph entitled *The Honors College Phenomenon* edited by Peter C. Sederberg in 2008.

The section below states the eleven basic standards (these have been numbered for convenience) that NCHC has established and describes how MTSU currently meets them.

Standard # 1

“A fully developed Honors college should exist as an equal collegiate unit within a multi-collegiate university structure.”

Compliance # 1

The College is considered to be equal with others in the University, and the Dean meets regularly with other Deans and Directors.

Standard # 2

“The head of a fully developed Honors college should be a dean reporting directly to the chief academic officer of the institution and serving as a full member of the Council of Deans, if one exists. The dean should be a full-time, 12-month appointment.”

Compliance # 2

The Honors College at MTSU is headed by a dean who reports directly to the University Provost. The dean sits on the Council of Deans and is a full-time, 12-month appointment.

Standard # 3

“The operational and staff budgets of fully developed Honors colleges should provide resources at least comparable to other collegiate units of equivalent size.”

Compliance # 3

The College has a Dean, an Associate Dean, two administrative assistants, a coordinator of publications, an events coordinator, and two full time and one part-time advisor, one of whom also directs the Undergraduate Fellowship Office. This appears comparable with other Honors Colleges. Most employees wear multiple hats, with deans and advisors spending an increased amount of time on the road for university recruiting events. The additional advisors are a direct result of the Quest for Student Success, and the Honors College has been especially pleased to have been included in this initiative. The College has also benefited from recent increases in the amounts of guaranteed scholarship aid to honors-eligible students and to the recent expansion of the Honors Transfer Fellowship program.

Standard # 4

“A fully developed Honors college should exercise increased coordination and control of departmental Honors where the college has emerged out of such a decentralized system.”

Compliance # 4

The Honors College continues to depend on academic departments to supply its faculty, but believes that it has established good relations with most such Departments and coordinates well with them. By the fall of 2019, the College anticipates having a full-time residential faculty member in economics.

Standard # 5

“A fully developed Honors college should exercise considerable control over Honors recruitment and admissions, including the appropriate size of the incoming class. Admission to the Honors college should be by separate application.”

Compliance # 5

The Honors College has been able to set its own criteria for admission. The College does not require a separate application per se, but the admission standards are higher than those for the University as a whole. The College selects its Buchanan Scholars and Honors Transfer Fellows, who do apply separately for admission to the program.

Standard # 6

“An Honors college should exercise considerable control over its policies, curriculum, and selection of faculty.”

Compliance # 6

The College has its own representative Honors Council that approves all new courses, faculty members, and thesis proposals.

Standard # 7

“The curriculum of a fully developed Honors college should offer significant course opportunities across all four years of study.”

Compliance # 7

The College offers more lower-division classes than upper-division classes but has designed an H-option for classes in majors that have more limited upper-division offerings. The College has two study-abroad programs and one study-away program. In conjunction with the Jones College of Business, it offers an Institute for Leadership Excellence each May. The Honors College also offers a Visiting Artist Seminar each spring.

Standard # 8

“The curriculum of the fully developed Honors college should constitute at least 20% of a student’s degree program. An Honors thesis or project should be required.”

Compliance # 8

Students must complete 120 hours to graduate from MTSU, and an Honors degree requires 29 hours (or just below 25% of all classes), 4 of which are devoted to an Honors thesis, which may be a creative project.

Standard # 9

“Where the home university has a significant residential component, the fully developed Honors college should offer substantial Honors residential opportunities.”

Compliance # 9

MTSU only houses about 3,500 of 22,000 students. One residence hall has been designated specifically for Honors students (it can house about 250) and has a reputation as a good place to study. The College eventually hopes to have an exclusive multifunctional complex closer to the current Honors building.

Standard # 10

“The distinction awarded by a fully developed Honors college should be announced at commencement, noted on the diploma, and featured on the student’s final transcript.”

Compliance # 10

The University currently meets each of these criteria. In addition, the President formally recognizes incoming Buchanan Scholars and Honors Transfer Fellows at the freshman convocation.

Standard # 11

“Like other colleges within the university, a fully developed Honors college should be involved in alumni affairs and development and should have an external advisory board.”

Compliance # 11

The College has had a Board of Visitors since 2007. It meets once a year, and the College regularly shares information with Board members and invites them to special events. Board members pledge to give \$1,000 a year, and some give significantly more. Members serve for three-year renewable terms.

Coda:

By present criteria, MTSU has a mature Honors Program. Both the Dean and the Associate Dean are active members of the National Collegiate Honors Council, and remain committed to keeping pace with any new standards that might be formulated. Staff members have also regularly attended and

participated in its programs. Both the Dean and Associate Dean have participated in external reviews of other programs. The College aspires to lead in Honors education and not simply to follow standards that others have established. MTSU's Honors College should be regarded as an aspirational model for other programs/colleges at large comprehensive state universities.

Part IV: The University and the Honors College

Reasons for Optimism

MTSU is strategically situated not only in the geographical center of the state but also in one of its fastest-growing regions. The Honors College has been fully involved in the University's Quest for Student Success and has increased not only the number of students enrolled in its programs but also the number who complete honors theses and those who have won prestigious national and international awards.

As the campus has grown, the Honors College is increasingly situated in the center of student activities. It is now in close proximity to the new campus center and to the campus one-stop for entering students. A ground breaking has been held for a nearby building that will house the College of Health and Behavioral Sciences.

The addition of the multi-function housing addition would vastly expand student involvement and program opportunities.

A Reciprocal Relationship

The current University Administration is clearly committed to the Honors College, and the College is featured in major recruiting events. The College seeks additional publicity through publication of its newly named news magazine and its award-winning *Collage* magazine, through its publication of *Scientia et Humanitas*, which offers another avenue for student publication, and through mailings throughout the state and through the promotion of its many events and programs through news releases in regional media. The College has hosted an increasing number of visiting groups of students and high school counselors.

Students who apply for Buchanan Fellowships (especially those from out of state) often consider MTSU because of other high-profile programs on campus with good reputations. The Aerospace Program, the Pre-Med Program, the Pre-law emphasis within Political Science, the Equine Science Program, and the College of Mass Communications are all good examples. The University clearly has the potential to increase the quality of the students who attend by stressing its Honors College. Likewise, the Honors College has an interest in stressing high-quality programs within the University as a way to attracting more and better students.

The University and the Honors College need to continue to formulate ways to work together on this relationship. A rising tide promises to raise both ships.

Part V: The Road Ahead

The Evolution of this Report

This report is a follow up to the *A Vision for the Future: Master Plan for the Honors College, 2009-2019*, which was submitted in the current dean's first year. The new plan has been formulated after surveying and talking with:

- students in the Honors Lecture Series;
- members of the Honors Council;
- members of the Honors Board of Visitors;
- current Honors Student Ambassadors;
- discussion with current Honors staff; and
- consultation with the provost.

As with the previous report, this report identifies goals for the next two years, seven years, and ten years, with the recognition that it is important to be flexible and to adapt to unanticipated changes and opportunities that develop during this time, including moving bigger-ticket items earlier if funding materializes.

Reviewing the Last Master Plan

The last Master Plan outlined some ambitious goals for the Honors College, and this is an appropriate place to review them. Each goal is listed below with a brief description of how the College has responded to it.

Years 1-2 2009-2011

Increase Off-Campus Publicity about the Honors College

Since the last report, the Honors College has continued to increase its presence at an increasing number of recruiting events. It continues to receive accolades for its newsmagazine, and it has begun to establish a presence on the web, which include Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Raise Monies for Scholarship Shortfall in 2009-2010

The College was able to meet the anticipated shortfall, and has, since the last Master Plan, received a major infusion of funds from the estate of Dr. James Buchanan, which has been applied to the Buchanan Fellows.

Increase the Number of Honors Graduates

This has been one of the Honors College's greatest successes and challenges. When the last Master Plan was published in 2009, the College was averaging about 25 theses a year. It is now averaging between 75 and 80.

Implement a Top Transfer Program to Increase Honors Transfers from Community Colleges

In 2013, the College initiated the Honors Transfer Fellows program for 15 incoming transfer students. This program was doubled beginning with incoming students in 2017. These students have been among the most impressive in the Honors College. Moreover, this programs aligns with the fact that MTSU attracts more transfer students than any other school within the state.

Strengthen Emphasis on Leadership

The Honors College has not only continued its Institute for Leadership Excellence in conjunction with the Jones College of Business, but it has also

established a vibrant circle of Omicron Delta Kappa, which has sponsored a number of leadership events on campus and through which a number of its students have been awarded scholarships.

Hire a Fund-Raising Coordinator

For the last few years, the Honors College has had the part-time assignment of an employee in the Foundation Office. Paul Wydra is currently in this position and has been helpful in coordinating fund-raising efforts.

Assist in Publication of Books Related to Honors College

Since the last Master Plan, the College sponsored a lecture series on the history of MTSU that resulted in a book and another series on prison writings, which resulted in another.

In addition, the University published an illustrated summary of an exhibit that it sponsored in conjunction with the Walker Library of the works of Eudora Welty.

Obtain Better Information about the Success of Honors Graduates

The College has been compiling a yearly poster with pictures and plans of all its graduates that it can identify. The data indicate that most are going to graduate or professional schools within a year or so of graduating from MTSU. The College seeks to maintain contact with alumni through its semi-annual newsmagazines and needs to make sure that each issue specifically solicits information from them.

Examine the Creation of Language Hallways in Lyon Hall

The College engaged in discussion with the Department of Languages about this option but was unable to guarantee enough student participation to make this functional. The College does continue to serve as the home for the Center for Accelerated Language Acquisition (CALA).

Implement an Additional Scholarship Program

Since the last report, the Honors College has received an endowment for a Centennial Scholarship, a scholarship for Native-American Indian students, and an additional scholarship for study abroad to honor Dr. June McCash, the founding director of the Honors Program at MTSU.

Implement National Student Exchange

The Honors Dean has been working with the Dean of the College of Basic and Applied Sciences to secure MTSU's participation in the National Student Exchange, which allows MTSU students to go to sister institutions for a semester or two and for those students to come here. MTSU has secured preliminary approval from this organization and will need to set up a site visit on the MTSU campus and send one or two delegates to this year's NSE meeting in New Orleans in early March. MTSU would like to work out a plan whereby honors students can continue to receive honors credits for courses that they make take at sister institutions. It is possible that the NSE coordinator will also be one of the Honors College advisors, although this may well depend on how thin these resources remain stretched among current students.

Years 3 through 5: 2011- 2016

Hire Additional Coordinator

The College has added one full-time and one part-time individual to help with advising and recruiting over the past 10 years.

Expand *Collage* Literary Magazine

The College significantly expanded its semi-annual news magazine before deciding that 68 pages was an optimal size. Because of the cost of printing, it has kept its literary magazine at 36 pages, though it is planning a special enlarged issue to commemorate its 50th year.

Establish Endowed Professorships and/or Joint Faculty Appointments

Although the College does not have any endowed professorships, it will have a resident economist beginning in the fall of 2019 as a result of a joint grant that it has obtained with the Jones College of Business.

Establish Exchanges with other Honors Colleges

This goal was neither pursued nor accomplished. There is a consortium of honors colleges within Nashville that plan some events together.

Take Part in Discussions of the General Studies Requirements

As the University contemplates revisions to its general studies requirements, Honors should make sure that any changes continue to emphasize the liberal arts and that there are sufficient honors sections of any new requirements to take care of honors students.

Years 6 through 10: 2014-2019

Reconsider Honors Baselines for Admission

Overall requirements for entry into the Honors College remain what they were, but the minimum ACT score required to apply for the College's top Buchanan Fellowship was raised in 2011 from a 25 to a 29, and the average now approaches a 34.

Reconsider Staffing Needs

Since the last Master Plan, one full-time and one part-time advisor have been added.

Establish Sister Institution for Foreign Exchange

Rather than seeking a sister institution, the Honors College has established study-abroad programs to Italy and Thailand.

Construct a New Living-Learning Center Adjacent to the College

Although this goal has not been accomplished, an honors residence hall remains on the University's Master Plan.

Other Accomplishments

Since the last master plan the College has successfully joined with the Jones College of Business to secure a \$3.5 million grant.

Since the last master plan, the College has completely reformulated its curriculum into a minor so that students can count these classes to a recognized course of study.

Since the last master plan, the College has sponsored a 50th anniversary celebration of its literary magazine, *Collage*.

Since the last master plan, the college has dramatically increased the number of students applying for, and receiving, national and international scholarships. Prior to 2009, only two MTSU students appear to have won Fulbright Fellowships. Since then, another 16 have done so. The first MTSU student to have received a Goldwater Fellowship was in 2007. Since then, six additional students have received Goldwater Scholarships and eight others have been honorable mention. The University has had its first Rhodes and Marshall finalists. The number of students within the Honors College who have received Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REUs) has increased dramatically. Eighteen students have received Gilman Awards, one was named to USA TODAY's top academic team, and many others have earned other awards.

Since the last master plan, *Collage*, the College's literary magazine, has created a website that features both audio and video submissions as well as PDF's of past issues. The College has converted *Scientia* into a broader publication, *Scientia et Humanitas*, which it has consistently published in print form.

Since the last master plan, with the help of President McPhee, the College has replaced most of the furniture in the lounge and first floor so that this area remains a showcase.

Since the last master plan, the College has successfully sponsored study-abroad programs in Italy and Thailand, as well as a study away program at historic sites in Virginia and Washington, D.C.

Since the last master plan, one of the advisors (Ms. Judy Albakry) now conducts an orientation for all students prior to their registration in the thesis proposal class (HON 4900).

Goals for the Next 10 Years:

Continuing Goals for all 10 years:

The Honors College has a number of goals that it needs to continue to pursue throughout the next ten years and that will remain both short-term and long-term priorities. These include:

Recruiting eligible students into the College, with special attention to constituencies like students who are home-schooled, students from rural areas, Native-American and other minority students, and transfers who may require special targeted efforts. With the expectation that Amazon will be adding an additional 5,000 jobs in Nashville, the College may want to target special efforts to the families of these employees, many of whom may be coming from out-of-state and therefore have more limited knowledge of MTSU and its Honors College.

Making sure that all searches for staff are conducted with a view toward seeking to increase diversity within the Honors College.

Supervising an increasing number of quality theses and creative projects.

Expanding the number of students who submit quality applications for national and international fellowships.

Informing students about opportunities for graduate and professional schools.

Encouraging and widening existing study-abroad opportunities for honors students.

Updating classes, insuring adequate offerings for existing honors students, and seeking meaningful topics for the student lecture series.

Promoting student civic engagement and service.

Seeking out and supporting opportunities for student research and publication both on and off campus.

Supporting a variety of activities (movies, game nights, field trips, etc.) that promote community within the Honors College.

Supporting quality publications within the Honors College as well as improving and enhancing the Honors College presence on

social media in order to highlight the Honors College and provide opportunities for student creative work.

Securing a line to hire a designated honors faculty member in a key discipline for a one-to three year appointment as a resident honors faculty, who could also help with honors theses.

Other More Specific Goals and Years of Implementation

Years 1 and 2: 2019-2021

Strengthen Recent Honors Ambassadors Program

As part of the discussions connected to the implementation of this Master Plan, the staff decided that one way of increasing student engagement and in the Honors College was to institute an Honors Student Ambassadors Program.

This program was initiated early in the fall 2018 semester with the selection of eight ambassadors who have already begun participating in recruiting and other events.

The Honors College will monitor this program over the next two years, explore ways that the ambassadors can be most effectively utilized, ascertain how effectively it is working, and examine whether the number of ambassadors should be increased.

The Ambassadors have suggested that one role they might fulfill is that of serving as mentors to new students. They also seem interested in going to events at their former high schools or community colleges to help with recruiting. The College has committed to helping them with any expenses that might be involved in such recruiting. The College is already utilizing them for Preview Days.

Sponsor a Major Conference to Honor the Legacy of Dr. James Buchanan

One of the College's greatest associations is its link to Dr. James Buchanan, an MTSU graduate who won a Nobel Prize in Economics and allowed his name to be used for the Honors College's highest academic scholarship.

In recognition of Dr. Buchanan's 100th Birthday anniversary, the College has made plans in conjunction with Dr. Dan Smith and MTSU's PERI Institute to hold a major conference in October 2019 that will bring scholars from throughout the nation together to discuss the legacy of his ideas. Dr. Smith has already entered into an agreement with the journal **Public Choice** to devote a special issue of this journal, which Dr. Buchanan had a role in founding, to the papers that result from this conference. These may, in turn, be compiled into a book.

The College is especially interested in involving MTSU students in this event.

Create Summer Research Opportunities for Students interested in Public Policy Issues

As part of a joint grant secured by the Jones College of Business and the University Honors College, the University has funding to sponsor student research over the summer. Dr. Dan Smith, who has recently opened a colloquium for students interested in reading classic economic texts, and the resident economist that the PERI center will be hiring will begin a PERI Undergraduate Summer Fellowship program in the summer of 2019 in which undergraduates interested in pursuing such research can get paid for doing it over the summer.

Increase the Number of Dual Enrollment Honors Classes

Entering freshmen are increasingly arriving on campus with one or two semesters of class work taken through dual enrollment, classes at local colleges, and or AP tests. This makes it difficult for them to complete the requisite honors classwork to graduate with honors.

The Honors College has partly adjusted to this situation by offering up to 9 credit hours of honors credit for AP tests in which students have received a score of 4 or 5 (the university typically offers regular credit for scores of 3). It also offers 3 hours of honors credit for students who make an A on the class that they take at Governor's School and credit for students who participate in the International Baccalaureate Program (I.B.).

Qualified students may, of course, take honors classes at MTSU, but if MTSU could offer more honors dual enrollment classes, like the English classes currently being offered at Blackman High School, it would make it easier to recruit such students to MTSU. The incoming principal and staff of Rockvale High School have indicated that they are interested in establishing a similar program there.

Hire Residential Economist

As part of the grant that the Honors College has worked with the Jones College of Business to obtain, the College plans to house an economist in the Honors College beginning in the fall of 2019, and an office has already been designated for this purpose.

It will be important to work with this individual to develop honors classes that will meet the joint needs of the Honors College and the Jones College of Business.

Seek an Additional Advisor/Recruiter for the Honors College.

The Honors College currently has one full-time advisor, one part time advisor, and one advisor who devotes most of her time to the Undergraduate Fellowship Office. All three are responsible for the increasing number of recruiting events. An additional advisor is needed to carry this load. It would be particularly good if a qualified minority could be hired for this position.

Hire a Faculty Member to Help with Honors Theses

The desired rise in the number of individuals completing honors theses has made it increasingly difficult to schedule them. Last year, the Honors College made an arrangement with the Departments of Biology and Chemistry to allow them to supervise their own theses as it had previously permitted the Department of Physics to do. This still leaves far too many theses for the Dean and Associate Dean to monitor. The College is hoping to give release time to a faculty member to help with this task. The College should also seek to work with departments and colleges to identify faculty thesis coordinators who would be willing to meet with students to brainstorm thesis topics and find appropriate faculty advisors for such theses.

Seek Increased Support for Honors Transfer Fellows

The Honors Transfer Fellowship has been extremely effective in attracting individuals who began their first two years of education through the Tennessee Promise Program, but, as tuition has risen, the relative value of this scholarship as a percentage of total tuition and fees has declined. The Honors College will ask that this figure be raised.

Examine providing greater funding for out-of-state Buchanan students.

Each year, the University offers up to five out-of-state students the opportunity to become Buchanan Fellows, and it pays their out-of-state tuition. Most such students, however, not only have greater transportation costs, but they do not have the option, available to many Buchanan students, of living at home. The College should consider allocating available Buchanan funds to provide support, perhaps equal to that of the lottery scholarships, to make it equally feasible for out-of-students to accept the opportunity, thus further diversifying this group.

Participate in NSSE Honors Consortium (Pilot) in Spring 2019.

By participating in a pilot program of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), the Honors College will have the opportunity to compare honors and non-honors students on every item in the standard NSSE survey as well as a small set of additional questions designed by a special working group of the NCHC Research Committee on which Associate Dean Philip Phillips served and contributed questions. The results will allow MTSU to use results for future plans and improvements.

Put special emphasis on the spring 2020 ODK initiation.

The spring of 2020 will mark the 10th anniversary of the Omicron Delta Kappa chapter at MTSU. The College need to call special attention to this inauguration, perhaps by inviting a special speaker or a representative from the national office.

Consider a 10-year celebration in the Spring of 2021 of the first Buchanan Graduating Class

The first Buchanan class entered in 2007 so its members would have graduated in 2011. The year 2021 would be an appropriate time to celebrate the accomplishments of Buchanan students.

Increase the Number of Applicants for Honors Transfer Fellowships.

In 2018, 72 students applied for the Honors Transfer Fellowship. With more students taking advantage of the Tennessee Promise Program, the Honors College needs to increase this number to make it more competitive.

Create a Regularized Schedule of Study Abroad and Study Away Programs.

The Honors College needs to project a 4-year schedule of study abroad and study away programs so that students can potentially take part in two such programs during their time within the Honors College. It should also continue to publicize other such opportunities throughout the university.

Formulate Guidelines for New Resident Faculty Members

The Honors College has been blessed to have resident faculty members who have contributed to the mission of the Honors College. Dr. Jill Hague helped formulate the curriculum for the Buchanan Fellows and teach students in this program. Dr. Diane Miller helped the College develop partnerships with the McNair Program, Dr. Kaylene Gebert offered classes to Honors Transfer Fellows. Dr. Shelley Thomas leads the Center for Accelerated Language Acquisition, Dr. Mary Evins leads initiatives directed to student civic engagement, and Dr. Robert Kalwinsky is offering honors classes through the College of Media and Entertainment.

In the fall of 2019, Dr. Kalwinsky's office will be occupied by the new resident economist. The College needs to develop a set of expectations for incoming resident faculty to maximize contacts with honors students and enhance honors course offerings.

Continue to Cultivate Positive Relationships with Community Colleges to Increase the Number of Transfers and Qualified Applicants for the Honors Transfer Fellowship

The College has engaged in a number of recent initiatives to partner with Cleveland State, Jackson State, Southwest and other community colleges and needs to continue to cultivate these relationships.

Be more proactive in informing students of campus resources for dealing with mental health and wellness

Although members of the Honors College, especially the advisors, make frequent referrals for students who need mental health and other professional guidance, the College as a whole has not specifically advertised this. The College will seek to sponsor, co-sponsor, or host at least one or two events a year highlight such services and support.

Increase the number of student presentations.

At a time when an increasing number of students are writing honors theses, it is important to encourage such students to publicize their work through poster presentations (on campus, at the Capitol, and elsewhere), papers at honors and professional conferences, and publications.

Implement National Student Exchange

The Honors Dean has been working with Dr. Bud Fischer, Dean of the College of Basic and Applied Science, to join the National Student Exchange that will open further opportunities for MTSU students. The Honors College will be part of an anticipated visit this spring.

Years 3-6, 2021-2024

Rethink Current Buchanan Fellows Program

Each year the University Honors College accepts 20 new students as Buchanan Fellows. The University provides full tuition and fees and a book allowance, and the Honors College uses the endowment provided by Dr. James Buchanan to supplement their studies with special help with study abroad and other academic opportunities. Just within the last few years, the College has specifically guaranteed an additional \$2,500 for each of these students for such projects during their time here. For the last several years, students have been required to have a minimum 3.5 GPA and a 29 ACT (or equivalent SAT score) to be eligible to apply, but a committee examines all applications with a view of also ascertaining obstacles that students may have overcome, public service and other extracurricular activities in which they have engaged, and in an attempt to get as diverse a group as possible to enhance the common core of classes that they take together.

The number of applications has risen steadily. It decreased when the minimum ACT was raised from a 25 to a 29, but then again exceeded prior levels. In the fall of 2018, the College went to an on-line application, which resulted in almost 350 applications, up approximately 75 applications from the previous year. This has led to raising the current minimum ACT of 29 to 30, but other changes should be considered.

One possibility is to raise standards still further. Another is to provide increased funding for study abroad and other activities to make the scholarship even more enticing. Since in-state students generally have access to lottery money to help with room and board that is not generally available to out-of-state students, it might also be desirable to provide somewhat greater funds for those from other states to help equalize this disparity. Yet another is to either double the number of Buchanans accepted (this would require additional scholarship money from the university) or to add an additional group to the program, perhaps with consideration to providing a greater international focus or providing special Buchanan research opportunities.

The College has decided for now to make this a topic for further discussion and deliberation until a consensus can be reached in conjunction with other university stakeholders.

Hold Special Celebration to Mark 50th Anniversary of the Honors Program.

The Honors Program at MTSU, which is the predecessor of the current Honors College, was established in 1973, and 2023 would be an appropriate occasion to host an event marking the 50th anniversary of the program. This time should also be an appropriate one for a targeted fund-raising campaign.

Work with the College of Business to Renew the Joint Grant that Supports the Resident Economist and Student Research

The current grant that is being used to hire a resident economist and provide financial support for student projects is now in its first of five years, after which it may be renewed and possibly even increased. The Honors College plans to be a continuing part of this process.

Review Recruitment Efforts among Special Groups.

The Honors College has had special success with students who are home schooled, with transfer students, and with other nontraditional students. These efforts need to be continually reviewed and refined.

Consider Dividing Responsibilities for National and International Fellowships

As the numbers of students applying for national and international fellowships increase, the College might consider dividing responsibilities between someone who would work with programs such as NSF, DAAD, Goldwater, and REUs that are primarily science oriented and those like Fulbright, Boren, Gilman, Phi Kappa Phi, and others that are not.

Promote and support student, faculty and staff activity at the National Collegiate Honors Council and other scholarly activities.

MTSU took several students to the NCHC Conference when it was held in Atlanta but did not register them in time for them to present posters. The College needs to look for future opportunities. The Dean, Associate Dean, and at least three staff members have been engaged in reading scholarship applications, judging national competitions, and running for national offices. These efforts need to be encouraged.

All three advisors in Honors have received money from the Office of Student Success to attend conferences, and this had contributed to their continuing development.

Years 7-10, 2024-2029

Seek Honors Housing Facility Closer to the Honors College Building

As discussed earlier, MTSU currently has a fully-developed Honors College that is the envy of many other state colleges and universities. It is blessed to have a residence hall specifically for honors students, but this residence hall is across campus. If the university decides to expand its residential housing, a residence hall in closer proximity to the College would be a further inducement for incoming honors students, especially if it could include a number of classrooms.

The College might also explore the possibility of using a public/private partnership to build a new residence hall, but it is important that if such a route is taken, costs do not vary significantly enough that they appear to create a financial disincentive for students to live there.

Seek Individuals for whom Honors College, like Current Building, May be Named

The Honors Building is proudly named for the father of Paul and Lee Martin, but the College itself remains unnamed, and remains open to a donor who would like such a naming opportunity.

Create a four-year, full-tuition scholarship for one or two international students

This is one of a number of methods that the Honors College should consider as part of its continuing efforts to internationalize the Honors Program.

Appendices

Enrollments in Honors College
Number of Theses and Creative Projects
Chart of Honors Advising
Chart of Recruitment Activities
Chart of Scholarship Applications and Awards

+