

BULLETIN

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Hallmarks of excellence in higher education. Keys to success in life. Be a part of it. Ask how.

Happy New Academic Year!

Campus is humming again, and the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) hopes that everyone's semester is off to a good start. For our part, proposal submissions and new award setup is brisk.

One purpose of our newsletter is to advocate the importance to the University of faculty engagement in sponsored scholarship—and to provide connections to support that endeavor. To that end, this expanded back-to-school issue includes reviews of recent operations and activity in two of MTSU's research and service centers, the Business and Economic Research Center (BERC) and the Center for Health and Human Services (CHHS).

If the work of these centers is of interest to you, in or out of the classroom, please feel free to contact their directors, Murat Arik (BERC) or Cynthia Chafin (CHHS). Also, if you'd like to know more about opportunities to collaborate with research centers and institutes at MTSU, please reach out to ORSP Director Jeffry Porter anytime.

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 1

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UPCOMING FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Agriculture and Food Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program

Deadline: Varies by program area

nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/rfa/20190507-fy2019-afri-foundational-and-applied-science-rfa.pdf

The Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) is America's flagship competitive grants program that provides funding for fundamental and applied research, education, and extension projects in the food and agricultural sciences. The goal of this program is to invest in agricultural production research, education, and extension projects for more sustainable, productive, and economically viable plant and animal production systems. The global agricultural output needs to be expanded significantly to meet the food needs of the population expected in 2050; thus, it is imperative to develop innovative, safe and sustainable management strategies for livestock, crops, and critical underlying resources.

Applications are requested for six AFRI priority areas through the Foundational and Applied Science Program for FY 2019 and FY 2020:

- plant health and production and plant products
- animal health and production and animal products
- food safety, nutrition, and health
- bioenergy, natural resources, and environment
- agriculture systems and technology
- agriculture economics and rural communities

Capacity Building Grants for Non-Land-Grant Colleges of Agriculture Program (NLGCA)

Deadline: Oct. 1

nifa.usda.gov/funding-opportunity/capacity-building-grants-non-land-grant-colleges-agriculture-program-nlgca

NLGCA institutions may use the funds:

- to successfully compete for funds from federal grants and other sources to carry out educational, research, and outreach activities that address priority concerns of national, regional, state, and local interest
- to disseminate information relating to priority concerns to interested members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities, the public, and any other interested entity
- to encourage members of the agriculture, renewable resources, and other relevant communities to participate in priority education, research, and outreach activities by providing matching funding to leverage grant funds
- through: (1) the purchase or other acquisition of equipment and other infrastructure (not including alteration, repair, renovation, or construction of buildings); (2) the professional growth and development of the faculty of the NLGCA Institution; and (3) the development of graduate assistantships

NIH: R01 Research Project Grant

Deadline: Oct. 5

grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/PA-19-056.html

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Research Project Grant supports a discrete, specified, circumscribed project in scientific areas that represent the investigators' specific interests and competencies and that fall within the mission of the participating NIH Institutes and Centers (ICs). The R01 is the original, and historically the oldest, grant mechanism used by the NIH to support health-related research and development. Research grant applications are assigned to participating ICs based on receipt and referral guidelines, and applications may be assigned to multiple participating ICs with related research interests. Applicants are encouraged to identify a participating IC that supports their area of research via the R01 IC-Specific Scientific Interests and Contact website and to contact scientific/research staff from relevant ICs to inquire about their interest in supporting the proposed research project.

NIH: R15 Academic Research Enhancement Award (AREA)

Deadline: Oct. 5

grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/pa-files/par-18-714.html

The objectives of this opportunity are:

- provide support for meritorious research at undergraduate-focused institutions or institutional components
- strengthen the research environment at these institutions/components
- give undergraduate students an opportunity to gain significant biomedical research experience through active involvement in the research

The AREA program will enable qualified scientists to receive support for small-scale research projects. It is anticipated that investigators supported under the AREA program will benefit from the opportunity to conduct independent research; that the grantee institution will benefit from a research environment strengthened through AREA grants; and that students at recipient institutions will benefit from exposure to and participation in scientific research in the biomedical sciences so that they consider careers in biomedical research. This AREA funding opportunity emphasizes the engagement and inclusion of undergraduates in research.



UPCOMING EVENTS FOR GEP

Introduction to GEP

Friday, Sept. 13
Noon–1:30 p.m.
Location: LIB 348

Please join us for lunch as we kick off the 2019–20 GEP cohort. David Butler, vice provost for research and dean of Graduate Studies, and Jeff Porter, ORSP director, will present an overview of the program, review the curriculum and expectations, and outline next steps for those who wish to join the program.

Please pre-register for the event [here](#).

ORSP Resources

Friday, Oct. 4
1:00–2:00 p.m.
LIB 264A

This session will introduce you to the ORSP staff and expand upon the services we provide. It also will cover how to search for funding using GrantFoward and site-specific funding pages (NSF, DOE, NIH, etc.).

Creating a Professional Development Plan

Friday, Nov. 1
Noon–1:00 p.m.
MT Center, Ingram Building

David Butler, vice provost for research and dean of Graduate Studies, and Jeff Porter, ORSP director, will explain the importance of creating a professional development plan (PDP), offer advice and insight into do's and don'ts, review sample plans, and outline next steps.

FRCAC APPLICATION DEADLINE:

Faculty Research and Creative Activity Committee proposals are due Monday, Sept. 16. Please visit mtsu.edu/frcac for more information.

NEH: Dialogues on the Experience of War

Deadline: Oct. 15 (including an option for a program officer review of a draft submitted by Sept 3)

neh.gov/grants/education/dialogues-the-experience-war

This National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) program supports the study and discussion of important humanities sources about war, in the belief that these sources can help U.S. military veterans and others think more deeply about the issues raised by war and military service. "Dialogues" is primarily designed to reach military veterans; however, men and women in active service, military families, and interested members of the public may also participate.

The program makes awards of up to \$100,000 to support:

- the convening of at least two sustained discussion programs for no fewer than 15 participants
- the creation of a preparatory program to recruit and train program discussion leaders (NEH Discussion Leaders)

Preparatory training and discussion programs may take place in veterans' centers, at public libraries or cultural centers, on college and university campuses, and at other community venues. The discussion programs should comprise multiple meetings that are long enough to allow participants to engage in deep and inclusive discussion.

HERE TO HELP!

For assistance with finding and preparing for funding opportunities, please contact your ORSP pre-award specialist:

Samantha Cantrell

samantha.cantrell@mtsu.edu

615-494-8751

Behavioral and Health Sciences, Liberal Arts, Media and Entertainment, Jones College of Business, Walker Library, University College, non-academic units

Jolene Gordon

jolene.gordon@mtsu.edu

615-898-5894

Basic and Applied Sciences, College of Education

Grant Writing Enhancement Program

The Grant Writing Enhancement Program (GEP) is a professional development experience of direct individual and group support for faculty and administrators, regardless of their level of grant writing experience.

The goals of the Grant Writing Enhancement Program include:

1. Prepare scholars to be leaders in their fields.
2. Strengthen a culture across campus of expectations, opportunity, and rewards for faculty engagement in sponsored programs.

3. Increase the number of faculty and administrators successfully engaged in grant writing at MTSU

4. Increase the number and dollar value of externally funded projects, programs, and centers across the University.

To meet these goals, the ORSP has developed a three-year curriculum consisting of the following components: professional development (Year 1), grant writing (Year 2), and award management (Year 3).

If you are interested in learning more about GEP, please visit mtsu.edu/research/GEP/index.php.

WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING

The ORSP is developing our campus training schedule for the 2019–20 academic year. Our tentative schedule includes these workshops:

September: Grant Writing Basics

October: Building Collaborations

November: Working with Federal Sponsors

January: Scholarship and Cybersecurity

February: Working with Tennessee Agencies

March: Entrepreneurship

April: Intellectual Property, Technology Transfer, and Commercialization

Summer 2020: Working with Foundations

FROM THE DESK OF . . .



**David Butler, Vice Provost
for Research and Dean of
Graduates Studies**

The magical day arrives when you discover a proposal that seems to fit your research needs almost perfectly. Then you look at the deadline and realize it is two weeks away. You proceed to convince yourself that if you work nights and weekends and you move your schedule around, you can make this deadline.

Don't. Do. It. I have been there. This plan does not yield the results you desire. Unless you have a near-perfect proposal, budget and budget justifications, and all other items ready to go, then the likelihood of success is near-zero. Good, successful proposals are not written at the last minute. They are written and rewritten over weeks and months (and sometimes years) to be refined and tightened into excellent prose and a budget that matches the project perfectly.

Learn from my past errors of last-minute lost evenings and weekends, and instead map out a 12-month plan to submit a fundable proposal. Work diligently toward that goal each day, week, and month, and it will yield a higher likelihood of success.

Center for Health and Human Performance

Now that construction has come to an end on Middle Tennessee Boulevard, one might note things that may not have been visible for quite some time, such as the unassuming small gray building next to the Ingram Building offices. MTSU's Lytle House is home to the Center for Health and Human Services (CHHS). CHHS was founded by the Adams Chair of Excellence in Health Care Services in 1993 and collaborates with public agencies, private for- and not-for-profit organizations, and MTSU faculty and students to improve the health and well-being of Tennesseans and that of our nation through externally funded research, programs, and projects.

Since 2001, CHHS and the Adams Chair have received over \$8 million in grants and contracts to conduct or facilitate research, communications, education, and training across the spectrum of public health issues of importance to Tennessee and at the national level. Grants range in duration from several months to more than a decade. With most of its funding and support coming from outside sources, it is vital that CHHS maintain a robust funding plan to successfully carry out its mission and vision.

Staff at CHHS include the associate director, Cynthia Chafin, who has been with CHHS since 2003; the grants coordinator, Sarah Gwinn, with the center

since March 2018; and several other staff specific to the many grants that operate through the center and carry out work impacting communities throughout the state. If you are not familiar with some of the many grants past and present of the center, please take a look at mtsu.edu/chhs. You also can follow CHHS on Twitter, Instagram,



and Facebook, where frequent posts are made regarding a variety of grant-specific activities as well as general health education messaging.



As grants coordinator, Gwinn takes the vision of CHHS leadership and translates those ideas into successfully funded proposals through a team approach with both CHHS leaders and ORSP staff. Gwinn is an excellent writer, communicator, and "grant finder," using resources such as GrantForward and online grant distribution lists, combing the internet and social media for new opportunities, and through ongoing communication with CHHS leadership and ORS about funding priorities.

Gwinn has several "best practices" tips that have proven successful in her CHHS work which she will share at future ORSP workshops. One of those tips is to continue to look for funding through alternate funding sources if a grant application is not successfully funded with a given funder. Another tip that has worked well for her and CHHS is to engage multiple faculty and departments as well as outside community partners for a successful and well-rounded proposal. Plan on coming to one of the upcoming ORSP workshops to hear more from Gwinn, or visit the CHHS website to reach any of the CHHS staff to learn about the center's work.

The center welcomes collaborative opportunities with other faculty that might impact the health and well-being of Tennesseans and that of our nation. They welcome calls, e-mails, and visits.

Grant Writing Basics

Friday, Sept. 20, 1:00–2:00 p.m.
Wiser-Patten Science 102

Expert panel:
Kris McCusker, History
Don Morgan, Health and Human Performance
Rick Vanosdall, Educational Leadership

[Register Here](#)

Building Collaborations

Friday, Oct. 18, 1:00–2:00 p.m., Wiser-Patten
Science 102

Expert panel:
Rick Moffett, Psychology
DeAnne Priddis, Communication Studies
Chandra Story, Health and Human Performance

[Register Here](#)

Business and Economic Research Center

Industry clusters, feasibility studies, economic impact, competitiveness, labor market, housing dynamics, international business, and regional analysis. These are but a few of the research areas in which the Business and Economic Research Center (BERC) is actively involved. BERC also publishes two quarterly reports: *Housing Tennessee*, in partnership with the Tennessee Housing Development Agency, and *Global Commerce—Tennessee and the International Economy*.



The BERC research staff includes Murat Arik, director and assistant professor of Management; Steven Livingston, associate director, professor of Political Science and International Relations, and editor of the *Global Commerce* publication; Joe (Zhuo) Wang, research associate; and a valuable student research team. In

the 2018–19 academic year, the student research team included a first-year Biology major, a junior transfer student majoring in Commerce, an international student in the Accelerated Bachelor's-to-Master's program in Business Administration, an MTSU alumna embarking on the Ph.D. program in Economics, and a senior International Relations major. These students were involved as interns (through the Tennessee Small Business Development Center), graduate assistants, graduate research assistants, and student workers. As students are directly involved in BERC research projects under the guidance of the experienced research staff and always working closely with the

director, they gain knowledge and skills that range from report writing to data analysis and from market analysis to professionalism.

Arik, Livingston, Wang, and the student research team are often called upon by MTSU to conduct studies in areas such as the economic impact of the University and its alumni, the impact of federally funded University research and development on economic growth, feasibility studies for prospective degree programs, and degree cost estimates. By far the greatest number of BERC research projects, however, are conducted for external clients, generally on a contract basis. Through BERC, the local, state, and broader communities have access to a respected and reliable business and economic research team. This service to the public is a significant reflection of BERC's engagement and of MTSU's active role in the community.

Recently completed projects in this category include an economic impact assessment for Habitat for Humanity of Tennessee, an economic and fiscal impact analysis for Cumberland University, a study of Williamson County's population growth and economic dynamics, a benefit-cost analysis of a proposed Cates Landing port rail system, and an economic and fiscal assessment of the city school system in Florence, Alabama. BERC is currently undertaking a wage and benefits survey and study that will lead to a report and analysis providing information that will be highly valuable for current and prospective businesses in the 40-county mid-state region. That project is sponsored by the Middle Tennessee Industrial Development Agency (MTIDA), one of BERC's important community partners.

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Arik, the BERC director and principal investigator (PI) on the majority of the BERC projects, seeks to work collaboratively with faculty from outside the center and from across campus, either directly in ongoing research projects or indirectly through shared data, analysis, or resources related to BERC projects. For example, BERC is currently in the final stages of a project analyzing STEM workforce dynamics in the Tennessee Valley Corridor, conducted in cooperation with the Tennessee Small Business Development Center (TSBDC). Arik reached out to a number of faculty from the Jones College of Business regarding data from the STEM research. In the first two sessions of the recently launched BERC Brown Bag Research series presentations, several of those faculty members and others introduced their current research related to the STEM survey project.

For example, Kali Thompson (TSBDC) presented "State of STEM Workforce across Tennessee Valley Corridor"; Millicent Nelson (Management) discussed "STEM Workforce and Organizational Strategy: A Survey-Based Assessment of Managerial Perspectives"; Kristie Abston (Management) spoke about "STEM Workforce and Outsourcing and Organizational Training"; Sam Zaza (Information Systems and Analytics) asked "Are Robots Taking our Jobs?"; and Amy Harris (Information Systems

and Analytics) addressed research into "STEM Workforce and Technology Needs."

BERC is also involved in studies in cooperation with MTSU's International Ginseng Institute and its director, Iris Ying Gao (Agriculture). Gao gave a BERC Brown Bag presentation, and Arik will speak at the upcoming symposium on ginseng. Sponsoring, developing, and participating in these research forums allows BERC to play an active role in fostering research. This is a high priority for the BERC director.

In addition to his director and PI roles at BERC, Arik teaches Management and Innovation Acceleration to MTSU undergraduates. In the local and academic community, he serves on the board of directors of Leadership Middle Tennessee and the Institute for Global Business Research, where he is associate editor of the *Global Journal of Management and Marketing*. Arik is also a member of the Tennessee Research Advisory Committee of the United Way ALICE project. He holds a Post-Doctoral Bridge Program certificate in Management from the University of Florida, a Ph.D. in International Political Economy from the University of Connecticut, an M.A. in Political Science from Syracuse University, and a B.A. in Public Administration from Ankara University.

UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CENTER

Fall Undergraduate Research Open House

The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) and the Undergraduate Research Center (URC) are hosting an open house for incoming freshman and transfer students and would love for you to join us.

Wednesday, Oct. 2, 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.
Science Building, 2nd-floor atrium

What's in it for students? First of all, **free lunch!** But more importantly, attendees will have an opportunity to talk one-on-one with student researchers and learn about their experiences in

mentored research. Students can check out research posters and ask student researchers questions about how they designed their research, how they selected a faculty mentor, and how they balanced coursework, extra curriculars, and research.

We hope to see you there!

Have a URECA student interested in presenting?

Check out our webpage:

https://mtsu.edu/urc/open_house.php

Deadline to register: Sept. 20 by 4:30 p.m.

Questions? Please contact Progra Manager Jamie Burriss at Jamie.Burriss@mtsu.edu



SUMMER RESEARCH CELEBRATION

On July 26, the Undergraduate Research Center (URC) hosted its annual Summer Research Celebration poster session in the Science Building. The event showcased research and creative activity being conducted by students at MTSU.

Students from a variety of academic disciplines presented their research on a variety of topics, including speech compression, corporate social responsibility, HPV barriers and initiatives, and fast screening of explosives.

