From Advising to Retention: How One Advising Office Evolved to Meet the Needs of Today

Presenters:
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Middle Tennessee State University

University College Advising Center

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From Advising to Retention: How One Advising Office Evolved to Meet the Needs of Today
Presenters: Heather Spell Arrington, Tyler Henson & Becca Seul
Middle Tennessee State University - Murfreesboro, TN

Below are some links to information on our website that we will reference today. We have also uploaded to the NACADA Conference website handouts relating to the programs and services we discuss in our presentation that cannot be found on our website. We have also uploaded our PowerPoint presentation from today to the NACADA Conference website.

University College Advising Center (UCAC) - http://www.mtsu.edu/advising/
  ▪ Academic Counselors and Undeclared Advisors - http://www.mtsu.edu/advising/advisors.php
  ▪ UCAC Programs and Services - http://www.mtsu.edu/advising/programs.php
  ▪ Online Advising Resources - http://www.mtsu.edu/advising/online.php

University Withdrawals - http://mtsu.edu/withdraw/
Documents uploaded to NACADA:
  ▪ Information Sheet
  ▪ Calendar for faculty and staff
  ▪ Consultation sheet

FOCUS Career Assessment - http://mtsu.edu/advising/advisor/FOCUS.php

Partners In Education (PIE) - http://mtsu.edu/pie/

CUSTOMS - http://mtsu.edu/customs/

Raider Learning Communities (RLC) - http://mtsu.edu/rlc/

Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship (TELS) Program - http://mtsu.edu/advising/programs.php#TELS

Next Step - http://mtsu.edu/nextstep/
Document uploaded to NACADA:
  ▪ Brochure

Generation Next - http://mtsu.edu/advising/programs.php#GenNext

Academic Success Series - http://mtsu.edu/advising/AcademicSuccessSeries.php

Tutoring - http://mtsu.edu/tutoring/

Financial Aid Verifications
Document uploaded to NACADA:
  ▪ Verification Worksheet

Summer Reading Program - http://mtsu.edu/summerreading/

We are happy to talk with you more in depth about any of our programs and services and the journey we took to where we are today with our center. You can contact any of us. Thank you for coming to our presentation!

Heather Spell Arrington - (615) 898-2808 - Heather.Arrington@mtsu.edu
Tyler Henson - (615) 898-5658 - Tyler.Henson@mtsu.edu
Becca Seul - (615) 494-8910 - Becca.Seul@mtsu.edu
FROM ADVISING TO RETENTION

How One Advising Office Evolved to Meet the Needs of Today

Heather Arrington, Becca Seul & Tyler Henson
Middle Tennessee State University
Office Background, 2003-2010

- Academic Support Center
  - Founded in 2003
  - 1 Director, 8 Advisors, 1 Graduate Assistant
  - Housed in Student Affairs

- Limited Services Offered
  - Undeclared advising
  - Prescribed (Developmental) course advising
  - Programs for a few special student populations
Office Background, 2010 - Present

- University College Advising Center
  - Moved to Academic Affairs
  - Currently employs 15 Advisors, 4 Administrators, 2 Graduate Assistants, 2 Secretaries

- Multiple Services Offered
  - Undeclared student & prescribed course advising
  - Programs for multiple special student populations
  - Now working with students from acceptance to graduation, instead of just the first couple years
Advising Different Populations

- Undeclared Students
  - Career counseling offered
  - Required advising until a major is declared

- Students with Prescribed (Developmental) Courses
  - All majors with these courses have required advising

- Pre-Major Advising
  - College of Mass Communication
  - College of Education
  - Pre-Nursing Majors
ACADEMIC COUNSELORS

- Undeclared Advisors also serve in this role
  - Every student at MTSU is assigned one Academic Counselor when they are admitted
  - No matter what major, their Counselor is the same

- Counselor Duties:
  - Answer general questions
  - Provide contact information
  - Contact students with Academic Alerts
  - Work with Undeclared students on probation

- Large caseloads, but no mandatory contact
  - Not utilized by every student, but available to every student if needed
UNIVERSITY WITHDRAWALS
HTTP://WWW.MTSU.EDU/WITHDRAW/

- Our office took over Spring 2010
- Started as information service regarding the withdrawal process
- Changes since Spring 2012
  - More communication/education across campus
  - Enhanced website
  - More resources for faculty
  - Comprehensive consultation for withdrawing students (optional)
  - Intervention with students to try to keep them enrolled or get them to re-enroll in the next term.
- Average 500-600 student withdrawals per semester
  - 20 to 22% retention rate of those students
  - Not stellar – attempting more innovative approaches
- Handouts
  - Information Sheet
  - Calendar for faculty & staff
  - Consultation Sheet
Began in 2008
- Two-part career counseling sessions
- An online retention tool used to assist freshmen seminar students with career exploration
- Became Focus2 in 2010, uses more in-depth resources and an action plan
- Now partner with Career Development Center to incorporate college resources
- Advisors use results to assist students with major and career selections
Partners In Education (PIE)

- Allows students to give family/caregivers permission to access specific academic information.
  - Grades
  - Progress reports
  - Disciplinary dispensations

- Activate PIE by submitting request for information to UCAC

- UCAC Advisors gather requested information from appropriate sources and report back to PIE partner and student
CUSTOMS

- Two-day freshman orientation seminar held during the summer
  - 11 total sessions currently
- Day 1 involves advising all students that we normally serve during the year
  - 200 on average each session
- Day 2 is held in computer labs helping students register for classes
- Promote summer reading, other programs during CUSTOMS days
  - Recruit for programs like Generation Next, etc.
- Between CUSTOMS days we check schedules, fix problems, see other freshmen and transfer students not attending an orientation session
RAIDER LEARNING COMMUNITIES
HTTP://MTSU.EDU/RLC/

- Courses that are linked together and/or share a common cohort of students
- Typically General Education courses
- Students get to know their classmates very easily and helps them create study groups for two courses
- Designed with first-year students in mind
- Some pairings are geared towards specific majors/areas:
  - Aerospace
  - Recording Industry
  - Business
  - Pre-Nursing
  - Psychology
  - Honors
- Register most students in RLCs during summer orientation
- Grown from 15 course pairings to 29 course pairings (Fall 2012)
TENNESSEE EDUCATION LOTTERY SCHOLARSHIP (TELS) PROGRAM

- Certain advisors work with students on retaining and regaining their Lottery Scholarships
  - Paperwork required from our office to repeat classes

- TELS Retention Program started in 2008 to help increase the low number of students keeping the Hope Scholarship
  - University 1010 (freshman seminar) class in fall for at-risk students
  - Intrusive advising, use of social media
  - Retention rates for students in the program significantly higher than similar non-participants
 Been in existence since 2008, saw increase in participation in 2010

- Now serves 70+ students/year
- Resource for former foster youth, homeless students and other independent minors
- No application, as-needed basis
- Specialized contacts in Housing, Admissions, Financial Aid, Student Support and Advising
- Group of student mentors is key to sustainability

NEXT STEP
HTTP://WWW.MTSU.EDU/NEXTSTEP/
GENERATION NEXT

Grant-funded program, 2010-2013
Incoming freshmen from Rutherford and surrounding counties
Must complete an application and essay

Must:
- Be first-generation & low-income
- Live in freshman residence hall
- Take a freshman seminar class
- Take a spring EXL course

Will have:
- First year housing deposit paid
- A live-in advisor
- Access to tutoring center/computer lab hours with that advisor
- Access to additional programming
1 hour workshops are designed for any student who needs help or wants to learn more about the topic area

Began Spring 2010 – 6 workshops
Grown since 2012 to 12 workshops
Now serving approximately 300 students per semester

Who support us?
- Library – Space and publicity
- Faculty – Encourage or require students to attend and some give extra credit for attending
- Academic Alert System – We got a checkbox!
- Advisors

Cost? – Freeish
- Paper & Ink for flyers
- Student Programs give us free poster prints for advertising in Res Halls
- Advertise online, email and campus marquee
FREE TUTORING INFORMATION
HTTP://WWW.MTSU.EDU/TUTORING/

- No central location students could get tutoring info
- Created tutoring website – Fall 2010
  - Email to campus asking who offers services
  - We post the info
  - Share with campus community via email, listservs, word of mouth (faculty, staff, students)
- It was so well received that first semester we have continued to do it.
- Students now expect the site to be updated each semester.
- No cost to us!!
Financial Aid Verifications

As of March 2011, MTSU now has a specific person, instead of a group, to complete homeless verifications for federal financial aid purposes.

Summer Reading Program (SRP)

- Since 2002, this office has headed the SRP
- Each summer, a new book is selected
- Provides a unifying experience for the entering class of students
- Partners with community organizations
- Each author participates in events welcoming the new freshmen class
ASC TO UCAC STAFF CHANGES

**ASC - 2008**
- 10 full time advisors
- 2 assistant directors
- 1 director
- 1 full time secretary
- 1 graduate level student worker
- 2 scholarship student workers (5 hours per week)

**UCAC - 2012**
- 15 full time advisors
- 2 assistant directors
- 1 director
- 1 assistant dean
- 2 graduate assistants (part-time advisors)
- 2 secretaries
- 8 student workers (5-15 hours per week)
- 1 graduate intern
Distribution of Work

- University College Advising Center
- Academic Support Center
OUR FUTURE (2014): ONE STOP SHOP
CONTACT INFO

Heather Arrington, Heather.Arrington@mtsu.edu

Becca Seul, Becca.Seul@mtsu.edu

Tyler Henson, Tyler.Henson@mtsu.edu

(615) 898-2339

www.mtsu.edu/advising
With the University College Advising Center provides assistance to students withdrawing from MTSU. Please use the information in this handout to help you make a more informed decision about withdrawing from one or all of your courses. If you have questions or concerns regarding your specific situation, please come by our office in the McFarland Building or call 898-2339 to schedule an appointment or email withdraw@mtsu.edu.

**Drop/Add Deadlines**

This information can also be found at [http://www.mtsu.edu/records/docs/reg-guide-2012U-F.pdf.](http://www.mtsu.edu/records/docs/reg-guide-2012U-F.pdf)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Term</th>
<th>Classes Begin</th>
<th>Last Day to Add or Late Register on RaiderNet</th>
<th>Drop/Add Form or Late Reg. Approval Required</th>
<th>Drop Without Grade</th>
<th>Drop with Grade of W*</th>
<th>Fee Adj. 100%</th>
<th>Fee Adj. 75%</th>
<th>Fee Adj. 25%</th>
<th>Max. Cr. Hr. Load for Part of Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Full Term</td>
<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
<td>Aug. 31</td>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Oct. 30</td>
<td>Aug. 26</td>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>A1 Accelerated 1</td>
<td>Aug. 27</td>
<td>Aug. 28</td>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>Sept. 27</td>
<td>Aug. 26</td>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
<td>Sept. 8</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>R RODP Term</td>
<td>Aug. 25</td>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
<td>Aug. 31</td>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Oct. 31</td>
<td>Aug. 26</td>
<td>Sept. 7</td>
<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>18</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Courses cannot be dropped on RaiderNet after the deadline date.*

Once the semester begins, tuition exchanges are only allowed for courses dropped and added with the same part of term with equal credit hours dropped and added on the same day.

Regents Online Degree Program (RODP) courses are charged at a different per-hours rate and are charged separately from MTSU courses. RODP courses will not evenly exchange with MTSU courses when dropping and adding on the same day.

Accelerated courses do not evenly exchange with full-term or RODP courses once the semester begins.
Fee Adjustments

This information can also be found at http://www.mtsu.edu/bursar/feeadjustment.php.

Middle Tennessee State University will grant tuition and fee adjustments for students who make changes to their class schedules or withdraw during specific times in a semester. Students who drop classes or withdraw from the University prior to the first day of the semester will receive a 100% credit on their tuition and fees. Once the semester has begun, students will be responsible for a portion of their tuition and fees for dropping courses or withdrawing from the University. Please refer to the Fall 2012 Registration Guide for important dates.

Even Course Exchange

There are instances where MTSU will allow students to drop and add courses without being charged for the dropped course. The following conditions must be satisfied to evenly exchange one course for another:

1. the student must exchange their courses on the same day.
2. The number of credit hours for the exchanged courses must be the same.
3. A student must be exchanging courses within the same part-of-term.
   Ex. RODP courses cannot be evenly exchanged with MTSU courses.
   Ex. Accelerated courses and summer sessions cannot be evenly exchanged with other parts of terms.
   Ex. Summer S1-May term cannot be evenly exchanged with S2-June term.

How Fee Adjustments are Calculated

Tuition and fee adjustments are calculated based upon:
1. the date of the withdrawal or the date the course was dropped and
2. the remaining number of enrolled hours.

For example, if a student is enrolled in 15 credit hours and drops to 12 credit hours during the 75% timeframe, the total tuition and fees would be calculated as follows: The student will be responsible for the full price of the remaining 12 hours plus 25% of the cost of the three credit hours that were dropped.

See Important Dates for tuition adjustment deadline dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjustment Period</th>
<th>Student Responsible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0% Tuition &amp; Fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>25% Tuition &amp; Fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75% Tuition &amp; Fees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fee Adjustments for Withdrawn Students

Students who drop all of their classes during a given semester are considered to have withdrawn their enrollment from the university. Tuition and fees will be adjusted based upon the student's withdrawal date. If a student drops all of their classes on the same date, their tuition and fees will be adjusted according to the fee adjustment deadline dates above.
What if I have financial aid and withdraw?

If you have received federal Direct Subsidized, Direct Unsubsidized, Parent PLUS loans, Pell or SEOG grants, and Lottery Scholarships, your aid will be prorated based on the amount of time you have attended. All or part of your aid could be prorated resulting in you owing money back to the university. A hold will be placed on your account preventing you from receiving grades or transcripts, registering for future semesters, or readmitting into the university until the balance is paid in full.

Please consult the University Withdrawal Office before withdrawing to see what affect this will have on your aid and your account balance. Please refer to the Financial Aid Office website for more information on how withdrawals or dropped courses will affect your aid.

What if I’m on the Deferred Payment Plan and withdraw?

Students who drop or withdraw from classes will still have a balance due under the deferred payment plan. Fees are adjusted based on the drop or withdrawal date. The refund percentage is NOT applied to the amount of the payment, but rather as a percentage of the total fees. A refund would only be issued to the student if the newly adjusted amount of fees is less than the amount that has been paid by the student.

To avoid late fees and ineligibility for the deferred payment plan in future terms, the student should continue to make payment by each due date. Contact the Bursar's Office for the new payment amounts after drop or withdrawal. Remember, withdrawal from classes does not negate the student's responsibility to pay the balance of fees after the semester has begun.

Tuition and Fee Charges for Fall 2012 & Spring 2013

All undergraduate students are charged at a rate of $234 per credit hour until they reach 12 credit hours. At that point, undergraduate students are charged $47 per credit hour for each additional hour over 12. Program service fees are charged at $67 per credit hour with a maximum charge of $797 capped at 12 credit hours.

All graduate students are charged at a rate of $378 per credit hour until they reach 10 credit hours. At that point, graduate students are charged $76 per credit hour for each additional hour over 10 Program service fees are charged at $67 per credit hour with a maximum charge of $797 capped at 12 credit hours.

For further information regarding tuition and fees, please refer to the tuition and fee section of the Bursar’s Office Web site.
Financial Aid

This information can also be found at http://www.mtsu.edu/financialaid/withdrawing_finaid.php.

When students decide to drop class(es), it may change their enrollment status. Financial aid is based on a student's enrollment status as of the census date (typically the 14th day of the Fall and Spring semester but not Summer). Students may refer to the Course Schedule & Registration Guide for the actual census date of each semester.

The following chart shows the different enrollment statuses:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Graduate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>9 - 9+ hours</td>
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<td>3/4 Time</td>
<td>7 - 8 hours</td>
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<td>1/2 Time</td>
<td>5 - 6 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than 1/2 Time</td>
<td>1 - 4 hours</td>
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</table>

The Financial aid Office tries to credit financial aid to the student's account 7 days before the semester begins so that the MTSU Bursar's Office can process the financial aid refund. Students are encouraged to set up direct Deposit so that the financial aid refund can be sent electronically to a back account designated by the student by the first day of classes. However, if a student changes his/her enrollment status before the census date, financial aid may be adjusted. Or, if the student drops a course before it begins even if it is dropped after the census date, financial aid may be adjusted. If aid is adjusted, a balance will then be owed to MTSU.

Quick Guide to Dropping Some BUT Not All Classes

Quick Guide to Dropping All Classes (Withdrawing from the University)

Dropping Classes

Withdrawing from all Classes

Effects of dropping Module Classes (A1, A2, & Summer Courses)

Attendance Reporting

How to perform a Return Calculation

Examples of Return Calculations

Always contact your counselor in the Financial Aid Office by phone at (615) 898-2830 or via your counselor’s email address before you make any decisions to drop classes or withdraw from the university!
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fee Payment/ Confirmation Deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Day for 100% Fee Adjustment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Last Day to Add a class or Late Register on RaiderNet</td>
<td>Late Reg. Fee Payment Deadline</td>
<td>Add Form or Late Registration Approval Required beginning 8/31/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 Late Registration Fee</td>
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</table>

Withdrawal Questions? Call Heather Arrington at 898-2808 or email withdraw@mtsu.edu
## September 2012

### Withdrawal Calendar

This calendar is for Full Term courses only. For withdrawal information for A1, A2, RODP & RA1 terms, please refer to the Fall 2012 Registration Guide.

<table>
<thead>
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<td></td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
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<td>Census Date</td>
<td>Beginning today students who drop a class will receive a “W”</td>
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<td>No Classes</td>
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<td>Last Day for 75% Fee Adjustment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>University Closed</td>
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<td>Last Day to Drop with No Grade</td>
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<td>Last Day for 25% Refund</td>
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Withdrawal Questions? Call Heather Arrington at 898-2808 or email withdraw@mtsu.edu.
## October 2012

**Withdrawal Calendar**

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<td>31</td>
<td>(continued) Individual course drops processed in Scheduling Center (JUB 123) with signed drop form thru December 7th.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:** Students who withdraw on or after October 30th may not have their financial aid adjusted. Students are HIGHLY encouraged to consult with Financial Aid (898-2830) about their situation prior to withdrawing.

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Withdrawal Questions? Call Heather Arrington at 898-2808 or email withdraw@mtsu.edu
# November 2012

### Withdrawal Calendar

This calendar is for Full Term courses only. For withdrawal information for A1, A2, RODP & RA1 terms, please refer to the Fall 2012 Registration Guide.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
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<td>Priority Registration</td>
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<td>Priority Registration</td>
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<td>Thanksgiving Holiday</td>
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<td>No Classes</td>
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</table>

**Last Day to withdraw from the University (all classes) and receive a grade of “W” or “F” as determined by instructor**

Withdrawal Questions? Call Heather Arrington at 898-2808 or email withdraw@mtsu.edu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual course drops processed in Scheduling Center (JUB 123) with signed drop form thru December 7th

Beginning December 8th thru December 14th course drops processed in the University College Advising Center (McFarland Bldg.) with signed drop form.

Withdrawal Questions? Call Heather Arrington at 898-2808 or email withdraw@mtsu.edu
Withdrawal Consultation Worksheet

This worksheet is designed to help students navigate the withdrawal process and should be used in consultation with the Withdrawal Advisor in the University College Advising Center. Please make sure you have carefully read the information provided in the Withdrawal Information Handout.

Today’s Date: _______________     Student Name: __________________________     M# _______________

Things to consider when withdrawing:

1. **What day do you plan to withdraw and how does that affect you?**

   Estimated Withdrawal Date: _______________
   
   **Note:** This date is determined based on when the student drops classes via RaiderNet, by documentation provided when withdrawing and/or by last date of attendance reported by faculty.

   Grade:  No grade    W    W or F
   Fee Adjustment: 100%    75%    25%    0%

2. **Do you have any type of Financial Aid for the semester you are withdrawing?**

   Students should consult directly with Financial Aid in Cope 218 or at (615) 898-2830.

   My Financial Aid Counselor is: __________________________________________

   Type(s) of aid: ________________________________________________________

   Effects on my aid: ______________________________________________________

   \[ \frac{\text{days attended}}{\text{total days of semester}} = \text{percent of aid earned} \]

I understand that:

- enrollment changes may impact financial aid eligibility
- this may result in me being required to repay portions of my Financial Aid award for the term in which I am withdrawing.
- this could cause me to have an account balance with MTSU resulting in a hold that prevents me from registering, obtaining transcripts and any further action with the University.

3. **Do you have the Hope Lottery Scholarship or any other academic scholarships?** Students who have the Hope Lottery Scholarship are required to maintain continuous, enrollment to keep the scholarship and withdrawing automatically causes students to lose the Hope Lottery Scholarship. Should you have any scholarships, you should consult with the Scholarships Office at 898-2830 or visit them in the JUB 206.

   Hope:  Yes    No

   Questions about Lottery? Contact Melanie Collins at (615) 898-5101

   Other: ________________________________________________________________

4. **Do you live on campus?** If so, you must go to KUC 300 to let the Housing and Residential Life Office know you are withdrawing. You may also contact that office via phone at (615) 898-2971.
Please read and initial:
I understand all the information presented to me and understand how this will impact my academic and financial standing at MTSU. I also clearly understand that withdrawing could cause me to owe a balance to MTSU, as stated above in the Financial Aid section of this consultation form. Student's Initials: _____________________

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**SPRING 2012 INFORMATION**

**Adding, Dropping, Withdrawing, Fee Adjustment Deadlines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Term</th>
<th>Classes Begin</th>
<th>Last Day to Add or Late Register on RaiderNet</th>
<th>Drop/Add Form or Late Reg. Approval Required</th>
<th>Drop Without Grade</th>
<th>Drop with Grade W</th>
<th>Fee Adj. 100%</th>
<th>Fee Adj. 75%</th>
<th>Fee Adj. 25%</th>
<th>Max. Cr. Hr. Load for Part of Term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Financial Aid Adjustment Deadlines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of Term</th>
<th>*Financial Aid is adjusted due to dropping classes before the Census Date (May owe a balance to MTSU)</th>
<th>*Financial Aid is prorated due to withdrawing from all classes (May owe a balance to MTSU)</th>
<th>*No Financial Aid adjustment even if withdrawn from all classes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Term</td>
<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>Jan. 12 – March 22</td>
<td>March 23 – May 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated 1</td>
<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>Jan. 12 – Feb. 10</td>
<td>Feb. 11 – March 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated 2</td>
<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>March 15 – April 13</td>
<td>April 14 – May 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RODP Term</td>
<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>Jan. 12 – March 22</td>
<td>March 23 – May 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Financial Aid will be adjusted based on attendance as reported by the instructor. Official last date of attendance (for students who have not officially withdrawn) will be determined by the instructor.
The transition into college can be challenging for all students. Those coming from foster care or homelessness or who have been living as independent minors might find it especially difficult simply because it’s hard to know how to begin the journey or who to turn to for help.

That’s why Middle Tennessee State University, in conjunction with the Department of Children’s Services and the Tennessee Youth Advisory Council, has created Next Step.

The keystone of our program is a group of student mentors. They are Next Step participants just like you who came from situations like yours. Participants come back semester after semester to offer peer support and encouragement to our newest members. Simply put, Next Step brings students together to help one another.

There’s no pressure to be involved in Next Step, and your level of participation is entirely up to you. We have administrators on campus in Admissions, Financial Aid, Housing, Academic Advising, and Student Support Services who would love to meet you and who are willing to help any way they can. Take the next step!

We’re here for you!

A small but growing community of students transitioning from foster care is already a part of the MTSU community. They look forward to your arrival!

Katie H.
Next Step participant and mentor

In addition to the usual adjustments, former foster kids have to deal with things like extra financial aid paperwork, which was really confusing for me. I wish I had known about the resources MTSU offers to help students in this situation. That’s what Next Step is about—gathering all these different resources to help you navigate your new college life! I enjoy being a Next Step mentor because I can help incoming students from special circumstances be successful at MTSU.

Jamie A.
Next Step participant and mentor

My first year, I felt completely overwhelmed with registration, housing, financial aid, etc. Facing all of these challenges at once on my own made me feel in over my head at times. The Next Step Program would have been so helpful. I chose to be a mentor because I know how frustrating this time can be and wish I’d had somebody to make the process easier.
Graduating from high school is an important milestone, and the decision to attend college can be a life-changing moment.

We’re happy you’re considering joining the MTSU community. Next Step aims to provide you with additional assistance in navigating many of the practical issues students may face regarding housing, academic support, and becoming comfortable on campus.

Admissions Office
(615) 898-2111
Cope Administration Building 209
The first place to start on your journey to MTSU is the Admissions Office. If you have questions about the admission process, contact us and we’ll walk you through the steps. Have you seen the campus? Register for a campus tour online by going to www.mtsu.edu/admissn.

Student Financial Aid Office
(615) 898-2830
Cope Administration Building 218
It’s important to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as possible, but no later than March 1. The FAFSA can be a little confusing for many students. In addition to working with us to get financial aid, be sure to work closely with your independent living specialist. Those who have participated in foster care and are now entering college are eligible for additional funding through the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and the Educational Training Voucher. Your independent living specialist will help you obtain all funds for which you are eligible.

Academic Advising
(615) 898-2339
McFarland Building
Our goal is to help you succeed at MTSU by answering questions, helping select courses, and connecting you with people who can help make this transition to college an easy one. Once you decide on a major, you will also be assigned to a faculty advisor who can provide information about internships, research opportunities, and careers or graduate work in your field. In the meantime, and anytime after, come by the office or call to set up a time when we can talk about how Next Step can help you succeed here at MTSU. Our door is always open!

Housing and Residential Life Office
(615) 898-2971
Keathley University Center 300
At MTSU, housing is available to enrolled students continuously throughout the year including semester breaks and holiday periods, although charges may apply. Housing personnel will be happy to work with you to file the necessary application, make sure your housing fees are paid, and help with other questions that may arise.

Student Support Services
(615) 898-5443
Midgett Building 101
Many students transitioning from foster care qualify for membership in the Student Support Services (SSS) program at MTSU. These students are eligible for additional free tutoring, academic and financial aid advising, participation in cultural and campus events, and exposure to a variety of academic and success workshops designed to enhance academic success.
Student’s Name ________________________________ MTSU ID ____________________________
Phone Number ________________________________ Email address __________________________

The above student has indicated that he/she is homeless or at-risk of homelessness for the indicated academic award year and provided any documentation available to support this status.

Personal Statement
Students: Please include a brief narrative describing your current living situation and any other information that needs to be taken into account to verify your status as homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________________

By signing this form, you are certifying the above information to be true and correct. This information will be used to verify your dependency status for federal aid.

Signature_________________________________________ Date ________________________________

(Remainder of form to be completed by Verification Staff)

Documentation Provided By/For Student:

Notes:

___ I certify the above student is currently homeless or at-risk of homelessness and should be verified as such by MTSU Financial Aid.

___ I am unable to certify that the above student is currently homeless or at-risk of homelessness.

_________________________________________ Date ________________________________

Becca Seul, University College Advising Center
Becca.Seul@mtsu.edu  615-898-2339