



OWLS Outlook

Vol. XIV No. 1

Middle Tennessee State University

Fall 2008

Nontraditional Student Week Activities at MTSU

November 3–7 is National Nontraditional Student Week. Colleges and universities all over the United States will have special programs and activities designed to make people aware of adult learners on their campuses. MTSU will celebrate with a variety of activities during the week.

Essay Contest for Nontraditional Student Week!

You are invited to write an essay to explain to others what it is like to be a nontraditional student at MTSU. The winning essay will be published in *Sidelines*, the student newspaper, the week of November 3. The deadline for submission is October 20. For details about the rules for the contest, go to Essay Contest description at www.mtsu.edu/~owls/essay.htm.

Wednesday, November 5, will be Nontraditional Student Day in KUC, in front of the Grill between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. This gives an opportunity for all nontraditional students to find out more about the OWLS student organization, to join OWLS, and to receive an OWLS pin. Plan to come by the OWLS table on November 5 to pick up your special nontraditional student gift and to help celebrate nontraditional students!

Our annual **Nontraditional Week will culminate with a potluck dinner** on Thursday, November 6, in KUC 322. Our traditional holiday dinner for nontraditional students and their families always features good food and lots of good conversation. Since it is a potluck meal, all participants should bring salads, vegetable dishes, and desserts that will accompany the turkey and dressing provided by the OWLS. Call (615) 898-5989 by November 3 to tell us the number in your family attending.

Initiation for **new Pinnacle Honor Society members** takes place following the dinner. We also honor December graduates and present the Pinnacle Award of Achievement at this event. This year, we are pleased to be able to extend an invitation to Sharon A. Mitchell-Pierre, an inspirational nontraditional student who will tell about her successes as well as trials after dinner.

—Dr. Carol Ann Baily, director

Want to Carpool to Campus? Check out www.mtsuoffcampus.com, our off-campus housing Web site. You can go to a variety of message boards, but the most useful right now is the carpool message board. The more people who post their availability for a carpool, the more matches will be possible and more students will be able to establish a carpool.



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Fall Events

OCT. 20 Deadline for

- Nontraditional Student Week Essay Contest
- Applications for membership in the Pinnacle Honor Society
- Pinnacle Award of Achievement for December graduates

NOV. 4 OWLs and Pinnacle join others for Election Night Party

• We encourage you to join us at the KUC Grill from 7 to 11 p.m. to unite MTSU students of all political backgrounds in an unbiased location and to celebrate our freedom of democracy. The event will include a freedom microphone for participants to express their opinions, food, gift giveaways, political speakers from both parties, a silent auction with proceeds benefiting the local domestic violence shelter, and, of course, live coverage of the presidential election.

We are co-sponsoring this event with Lamda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority, the Student Government Association, College Democrats, Lambda Theta Phi Latin Fraternity, and the NAACP MTSU Chapter.

Other organizations participating in this event include Blue Raider Veterans, Economy Club, Murfreesboro AAUW, the Collegiate 10, MTTV, Channel 10, and Phi Alpha Delta Honor Society.

NOV. 5 10:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Nontraditional Student Day Come by the table in front of the Grill for your special gift and to find out more about our Older Wiser Learners student organization.

NOV. 6 5:30–7:30 p.m.

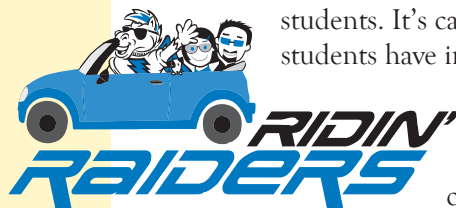
Annual Nontraditional Student Week Potluck Dinner in KUC 320 Bring your favorite dish to serve 8–10 and your favorite family beverage to go along with the turkey and dressing provided by OWLs. Call 898-5989 with the number in your family who will attend by Nov. 3 so we will have enough meat for everyone.

News Update

As many of you are aware, Off-Campus Student Services changed its name a year ago to better serve all students who live off-campus and commute to classes. We made our Web site more user friendly, especially the online handbook, which provides information to students about various services available on campus. When you need to know about an office or service on campus, go to www.mtsu.edu/~ocss and then click **Handbook** on the left. You'll find great tips organized in a way to make it easier for you to find what you are looking for. You know how hard things are to find in the A-to-Z index when you don't know what to call them? This handbook attempts to group items in a way that will make it easy for you to find them, and then you can see it and say, "Oh, that's what they call that office!"

Another phase of online Off-Campus Student Services began this fall with the **Off-Campus Living Guide**. It provides information about selecting a place to live off campus, tips on how to make off-campus life affordable, and details about expenses that need to be considered (insurance, for example). It even includes ideas on how to remain connected to MTSU though you live off campus. It has good information for traditional-age students who are thinking about moving off campus. It complements our apartment search Web site at www.mtsuoffcampus.com. **Even** if you aren't looking for an apartment, you can use that site's message boards to find a carpool, a roommate, or possibly furniture.

A new student organization has begun for commuting students. It's called **Ridin' Raiders**, and about 400 students have indicated an interest in belonging to the organization and in working for better conditions for commuting students. If you want to join, e-mail commuter@mtsu.edu.



Scholarships through OWLS

OWLs members who have a 3.0 GPA may apply for **ten OWLs Academic Service Scholarships** each year. They pay \$1,500 per semester and require five hours per week of work on campus, plus they are renewable for up to six semesters if you maintain a 2.5 semester GPA and a 3.0 cumulative GPA.

We also have **two Enrichment Scholarships** for one year only. They are available for members with a 2.5–2.9 GPA.

There are also two privately endowed scholarships for seniors who are women in transition or seniors who are majoring in elementary education. They require a 2.9 GPA or better.

If you qualify for any of these scholarships, you will want to join OWLs so that you can apply for them. Scholarship applications will be available in January for the 2009–2010 year. The scholarship application deadline is March 15.

President's Perspective

Calling All Nontraditional Students!

If you are an adult student who can answer yes to any one of the following statements,

- I did not attend college directly after high school;
- I made the decision to return to college after 5, 10, 20, or more years;
- I am working and going to school at the same time;
- I am a single parent;
- I am married with or without children; or
- I am juggling adult responsibilities and caring for parents or relatives . . .

—then you are a nontraditional student!

We have a great place just for students like you right here at MTSU: our convenient office is located in KUC 320. Please feel free to come by and visit the Off-Campus Student Services office and speak with one of our friendly OWLS members, our secretary Virginia, or our wonderful director, Dr. Baily, about our program.

Our office offers many helpful services to make your educational experience more enjoyable and productive. We even have scholarships available specifically for our OWLS members (Older Wiser Learners), a comfortable area for lounging, and a kitchen equipped with a microwave where you can drink coffee and eat lunch. We also have computers available with Internet access and a printer.

We will host a variety of free social gatherings during Nontraditional Student Week, which takes place Nov. 3–7. On Tuesday, Nov. 4, we will be cosponsoring the Unity Election Party 2008 in the KUC Grill from 7 to 11 p.m. to unite MTSU students of all political backgrounds

in an unbiased location and to celebrate our freedom of democracy. See the Fall Events listing in this newsletter for details.

On Thursday, Nov. 6, we will have our annual Nontraditional Student Week potluck dinner, where all of our OWLS can bring their families together and enjoy a delicious turkey dinner on us. We just ask that each family bring a side dish that feeds 8–10 people and a liter of your family's favorite beverage. This year, we have invited Sharon Mitchell-Pierre to deliver an inspirational speech and provide words of encouragement about overcoming daily struggles as a nontraditional student. Then, we will induct new members into the Pinnacle Honor Society, which recognizes academic success in nontraditional students.

Join OWLS for these activities and you will have the opportunity to meet other students with similar life experiences and build friendships and support systems throughout your college career.

I would also like to invite and encourage our current OWLS members to take a more active role in our organization by becoming an officer or committee member. I have had the privilege of serving as OWLS president and would love to see other members have the same opportunity.

Make the best of your college experience, and join OWLS today.

The office is located in KUC 320, and our Web site is www.mtsu.edu/~owls. We look forward to seeing you!

Monique Denney, OWLS President

Join the Pinnacle Honor Society

Do you work full-time while attending MTSU? Do you care for a family member (parent, sibling, or child) while attending MTSU? If you answered yes, even if you are a younger, traditional-age student, you are still a nontraditional student. Also, if you are a junior and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher, or if you are a graduate student with a GPA of 3.4 or higher, you deserve to be recognized by the Pinnacle Honor Society. The society was founded by Dr. Frank Julian, a faculty member and administrator at Murray State University in Murray, Kentucky, in 1989. Dr. Julian recognized the dedication of nontraditional students and institutional failure to recognize these deserving students in traditional honor societies.

Membership in a national honor society, such as the Pinnacle Honor Society, looks good on your resume. It also provides you a support system while you continue to achieve academic success. Perhaps you could and would enjoy encouraging others by taking on a leadership role in Pinnacle once you are a member.

If you meet the criteria above, you should have received an e-mail invitation to join. The deadline is October 20. **You may apply online. Just go to www.mtsu.edu/~owls/pinn.htm.** Call us at 898-5989 if you have questions.

Christiana Mathieson, Pinnacle President

A OWLs Awards



Madonna Myers and family at the 2008 picnic.



Sarah Martin, 2008 Juggling OWLs Award



Above: Monique Denny accepts the 2008 Best OWLs Family Award

Below: Virginia Ellis, Best OWLs Secretary Ever!



At the end of each spring semester during our annual picnic, the OWLs present awards to people who are notable for their support and those who are examples for all OWLs members. Below are the winners for 2008.

The Best OWL Professor 2008 went to **Dr. Patricia Parker**, associate professor, Sociology and Anthropology.

Others nominated for this award included Alyson Lynn, instructor, English; Jack Purcell, associate professor, Philosophy (2 nominations); and Alyson Smith-Bass, associate professor, Elementary and Special Education.

The Best OWL Husband, 2008, is **Edward Mathieson**, husband of Christina Mathieson—Edward works double shifts and does all the housework so Christiana will not be distracted from her schoolwork. He refuses to let her quit school to go back to work. He also takes care of their 10 dogs.

The Best OWL Family, 2008: the **Denneys**—Richard and Monique and their five children. A fellow student lauded Monique and Richard for juggling courses (Richard is now doing graduate work) and their family of well-behaved children in addition to taking leadership responsibilities in several student organizations.

Monique serves as OWLs president and a vice president of Lambda Theta Alpha sorority. Richard served as a founder of the Lambda Theta Phi fraternity and president of FMA. Together, they are an impressive team.

The Best OWL Friend, 2008, is **Sheila Umayam**, nominated by Monique Denney. Sheila has taken extended lunch breaks in order to

babysit while Monique prepared for final exams. She also helps with the children at campus events since there are five of them to keep track of. She has provided an unlimited amount of encouragement and support by listening and being a true friend.

The Best Juggling OWL, 2008, is **Sarah Martin**.

Sarah begins each day with a lengthy commute from Lafayette, Tennessee, almost all the way from the Kentucky border. Yet, she only missed classes when a tornado blew through her county and left the roads impassable with debris. She juggles her husband and children at home with her courses and maintains a good GPA. She is a perfect example of a Juggling OWL award winner.

The Best OWL Volunteer, 2008, is **Mike Choate**.

Not only does Mike volunteer for OWLs but also gives his free time to Alive Hospice, Gilda's Place, and other organizations. He was a big help with the ANTSHE conference.

The Best OWLs Secretary Ever is **Virginia Ellis**. Virginia was nominated by two different students as the best volunteer. They said that she was very welcoming and friendly to visitors in the office and that she should be recognized. We agreed, but since she is not a volunteer, we couldn't use that category. So we made a new category just for the Best Secretary Ever to present to Virginia at the picnic.