

# Aug. 9 commencement to feature professor's address

by Lisa L. Rollins

**A** projected 832 degree candidates will graduate during the 96th annual summer commencement ceremony, MTSU officials announced.

The single-ceremony graduation will begin at 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 9, in Murphy Center with Dr. Kevin E. Smith, professor for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the current MTSU representative to the Tennessee Board of Regents' Faculty Subcouncil, delivering the commencement address.

Some 700 of this summer's degree candidates will be undergraduates, said Sherian Huddleston, assistant vice provost for enrollment services. One hundred twenty-nine students are slated to graduate from the College of Graduate Studies, including 117 master's degrees and 11 specialist in education degrees. Three graduate certificates also have been earned, but these are not bestowed during the commencement event.

Prior to joining the MTSU faculty in 1994, Smith served as an archaeological field and lab director for projects investigating plantation landscapes and slave life at The

Hermitage, home of U.S. President Andrew Jackson, and as a field director for the Vanderbilt University Archaeological Field School. He also was a teaching fellow of anthropology for VU from 1986 to 1991 and a state archaeologist in 1990-91, where he was principal investigator for archaeological projects on state lands before being named a federal programs archaeologist for the Tennessee Division of Archaeology from 1991 to 1994.

Smith earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1986 and a Master of Arts degree in 1990 in anthropology from VU before garnering a doctorate in



Smith

anthropology in 1992 from the same university. He also holds memberships in a number of professional archaeological organizations. In addition to his 2007-08 tenure as president of MTSU's Faculty Senate, Smith has penned numerous journal articles, technical papers, reports and book chapters as well as book reviews and encyclopedia entries. His upcoming book, *Speaking with the Ancestors:*

**Who:** 832 graduates\*  
**What:** Summer 2008 commencement  
**When:** 10 a.m., Saturday, Aug. 9  
**Where:** Murphy Center, MTSU

**Speaker:** Dr. Kevin Smith, professor of sociology and anthropology and immediate past president of the MTSU Faculty Senate.

**For more info:** Go to [www.mtsunews.com](http://www.mtsunews.com) and click on the "Graduation Info" link at the left side of the page.

\*Approximate number as of July 21, 2008.



*Mississippi Stone Statuary of the Tennessee-Cumberland Style*, is to be published in November.

Dr. Diane Miller, vice provost for academic affairs and interim chairwoman of the commencement committee, said she wants to remind all degree candidates of the importance of appropriate dress, decorum and respect for the ceremony.

Miller also noted that the graduation committee emphasized that students who participate in commencement will be required to stay for the entire ceremony. The ceremony should last about two hours.

Candidates planning celebration

activities should be aware of this commitment, she said.

At 8:30 a.m. Aug. 9, Murphy Center doors will open for the commencement ceremony. Candidates are expected to be in their assigned areas, dressed in their caps and gowns, no later than 9 a.m. Officials report that students who are not in their assigned gym at the proper times will not be allowed to participate in the ceremony. Because rehearsals are no longer conducted, timely attendance is mandatory for students.

For more information about commencement, visit [www.mtsu.edu/~records/grad.htm](http://www.mtsu.edu/~records/grad.htm) or call 615-898-2919.

## U.S.-Sino Workshop creates collaborators, friends

by Tom Tozer

**D**r. Diane Miller means what she says. When the newly appointed vice provost issued directives to all who participated in the recent U.S.-Sino workshop on mathematics and science education, she told them this was not going to be a "meet-and-greet-and-then-let's-go home session." It certainly wasn't.

American and Chinese scholars traded e-mail addresses as well as phone and fax numbers, and they made a commitment, as members of 12 Research Working Groups, to continue their collaboration for the next several months or years that would produce meaningful and lasting outcomes—outcomes that will ultimately have an impact on classroom teaching and learning.

"We'd been planning this for the last 18 months," Miller said. "Dr. McPhee proposed the idea to President Wang Li Min of Northwest Normal University, Lanzhou, People's Republic of China, in 2006. He asked me to take charge, and I wrote a proposal to the National Science Foundation in the spring of 2007 and submitted it in the fall of that year."

The weeklong event in June was co-hosted by MTSU and NWN. U.S. Congressman Bart Gordon delivered the opening address, and plenary

speakers included scholars from the National Science Foundation, The Carnegie Foundation, NWN and the Ministry of Education, P.R. China.

At the beginning of the week, nearly 125 scholars gathered together and presented topic-session papers. From those sessions, participants joined with others of similar interests and formed Research Working Groups, which spent the week discussing math and science curriculum, teacher preparation, assessment, integrating technology into the classroom, professional development and reaching the underserved population.

"On Friday, we asked the RWGs to summarize their discussions and what they hoped to accomplish as a working group in the future, including a timeline if they were that far into the process," Miller explained, adding that the reports turned out to be one of her most memorable experiences that week. "I really didn't know what to expect—they far exceeded my expectations."

It wasn't all work and no play. "We built in social time because I firmly believe the friendships that were developed will sustain the professional relationships that are needed to complete these research projects," Miller said.

"A lot of people commented that they thought this was a very successful part of the workshop," she continued. "You had groups that spoke differ-

ent languages and came from different cultures. Even their research paradigms are different. The research language is different in the United States from the language of Chinese researchers."

Several MTSU faculty and students served as translators in both formal and informal gatherings whenever they were needed.

The National Science Foundation has expressed an interest in providing funding for U.S. scholars to go to China for a follow-up workshop, if the research groups maintain their momentum, Miller said. She plans to keep in touch with the RWG facilitators and will post updates on a Web site.

"One group has already set up a discussion group online, and everyone is copying me on their correspondence," she said. "So, yes, the work has just begun, and the real success of the workshop won't be determined for several months. It will depend on these RWGs truly working together."

"We hope people will implement their research plans, present at professional conferences and publish from that. And we hope to get the group back together again. There were absolutely no difficult times. Everything went so smoothly and everyone seemed to be so happy ... it was a little scary."

## Miller welcomes busy workload as new vice provost

by Tom Tozer

**D**r. Diane Miller's new role as vice provost became effective July 14, and she's already hard at work keeping the approval process moving for three proposed doctoral degrees: computational science, mathematics and science education and molecular biosciences.

If the Tennessee Board of Regents and Tennessee Higher Education Commission give their nods to the degrees, the programs could be in place by fall 2009.

"This office helps to facilitate the flow of paperwork related to curricula issues," Miller

said, "which might include starting a new degree program or revising an existing program or course curriculum."

Miller also will work with reviewers who examine degree proposals, field student questions or problems and handle grade appeals. In addition to providing leadership for several centers on campus and continuing as director of the McNair Scholars Program, Miller noted that the provost also asked her to take on a new task of providing an organizational structure



Miller

for all programs dealing with international affairs, including devising new ways to attract more students from other cultures.

"I welcome Dr. Diane Miller to this senior level academic administrative position," said President Sidney A. McPhee. "Dr. Miller brings with her a wealth of experience as both a faculty member and an administrator and as a former president of the Faculty Senate. Her dedication and commitment to the university are certainly assets as she provides leadership in many areas within Academic Affairs and across the campus."

"I've been humbled and appreciative of all the e-mails and cards from people wishing me well," Miller said.