Update from the Department Chair, Dr. Warner Cribb:

I hope that all of our alumni are having a great summer. I apologize for the lateness of the quarterly newsletter. I have no excuse except that I spent much of June buried in a geochemistry lab. As always, summer is mostly quiet on campus. However, here are a few important and newsworthy items:

In its 2016 session, the Tennessee State Legislature approved reorganization of the Tennessee Board of Regents, effectively ending TBR's oversight of MTSU effective spring, 2017. A new and independent MTSU board will be appointed. It is our hope that the new governance structure will allow the University to more quickly adapt to the rapidly changing higher education climate. For Geosciences, this should facilitate our ability to enhance and modify our undergraduate and graduate programs to better prepare our students for the workforce and post-graduate studies.

I am happy to report that the Department fared very well in its five-year external review, which was conducted by representatives of the Council on Undergraduate Research in late March. The reviewers, from the University of South Florida and the University of Nebraska at Omaha, were impressed with the Department’s growth in undergraduate and graduate majors, the quality of our new faculty, and the development of new teaching and research facilities. They were particularly impressed with the enthusiasm of our students.

We have been given ‘firm’ dates for moving into our new home in Davis Hall. Between December 12 and 23 of this year, the faculty, staff, students, computer labs, teaching labs, research labs, and literally thousands of teaching samples will be moved into new offices, classrooms and laboratories. For me, this is particularly exciting because all of my geochemistry instrumentation and sample preparation equipment will finally be located in the same laboratory spaces, rather than in separate buildings. The geochemistry lab also will be home to a new powder x-ray diffractometer, opening many opportunities in mineralogy teaching and research. I very much hope that each of our alumni will come visit us after the move to see how the ‘old’ Davis has been renovated into an outstanding new teaching and research facility.

Finally, I want to thank each of you who generously contributed to our new undergraduate scholarship funds. These scholarships, named for recently retired faculty, were awarded for the first time at our year-end Student Appreciation and Awards Reception in late April. Please help us continue to grow this tradition by contributing to our scholarship fund!
The Department’s annual Student Appreciation and Awards Reception was held on campus in late April. This event has become a fun Geosciences tradition. The highlight of the evening was presentation of four new scholarships in the names of our retired faculty. Dr. Ralph Fullerton (left) (retired Professor and former Department Chair) and his wife, Joyce, were in attendance. Dr. Fullerton presented the scholarship given in his name. This year’s scholarship winners are: Laiken Stephens – The Burt Bordine Scholarship, Leanna Davis – The Ralph Fullerton Scholarship, and Matthew Togger – The Paul O’Farrell Scholarship.

In addition to the scholarship winners, the following students received awards at the Student Award and Appreciation Reception in April:

Outstanding Physical Geography Students:
- Cody Hannah
- Bryan Jones
- Jarrod Shores

Outstanding Geology Students:
- Brandon Armstrong
- Jordyn Hyden
- Charlotte Byrd
- Nate Johnston
- Amanda Corey
- Jack Powers
- Leanna Davis
- Michael Randolph
- Elizabeth Gant
- Laiken Stephens
- Novella Greer
- Jenny Strobel

Estwing Rock Hammer Award:
- Briana Vidal

Congratulations to our May graduates!
- Bishop Wagener
- Laurel Blackman
- Briana Vidal
- Leland Douglas
- Bryan Jones
- Tyler Smith
- Jack Powers
- Wesley Ellis
Student Spotlight – Leanna Davis (Undergraduate)

I didn't intend on becoming a geologist, but I can't imagine being anything else now! After I took my introduction to geology class, I was hooked.

I began the geoscience program in 2013 and will graduate spring 2017. One of my favorite parts of this major is the field trips. I've gone on various field trips for almost all my classes at MTSU, as well as field camp through the University of Memphis. I value each of these field trips because they give me the opportunity to transfer skills I learned in the classroom into the field.

For two years, I have been a tutor for Introduction to Earth Science students. I really enjoy assisting future geoscientists in their first course and possibly even recruiting new folks into the major! Last semester, I was awarded the Ralph Fullerton Scholarship, one of the first geoscience scholarships offered through MTSU. I am so thankful to have received this scholarship because it assisted me in attending my field camp of choice.

I also have had opportunities to participate in undergraduate research projects through the MTSU Undergraduate Research Experience and Creative Activity program and the NASA Tennessee Space Grant. I've worked with two professors, Dr. Mark Abolins and Dr. Racha El Kadiri, on undergraduate research projects. I am the 2016-17 President of our Sigma Gamma Epsilon chapter, a position which I hope to use to create geoscience outreach projects enabling as many students as possible to become part of the geoscience community at the University and beyond! Additionally, I hope to organize more ‘fun’ student activities, such as geology trivia nights, and public service events, such as clean-up of local streams and rivers.

I am looking forward to attending graduate school after I complete my degree at MTSU. I am currently exploring several different opportunities, but would love to attend graduate school somewhere in Europe! I am so thankful for all the professors, peers and experiences at MTSU that have helped me on my way to becoming a geoscientist!
Summer Field Trips!!

Enjoy a few photos of our students on their summer adventures! (Those were THE days, right?)
Buy our bling before we move!

The Department of Geosciences is selling its surplus promotional inventory in order to reduce the amount of ‘stuff’ we have to move to Davis. These are left-over items from give-aways at the annual student appreciation ceremony. All money from the sale of these items (minus shipping) will be put into our student scholarship accounts. We have a limited number of each item, so please send us your order as soon as possible. If we are out of an item, we will notify you.

Pint Glasses - $22  
Coffee Mugs - $15  
Water Bottles - $10  
Lunch Boxes - $10

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Makes checks payable to: MTSU Dept. of Geosciences, and in memo line write ‘scholarships’

MTSU Geosciences – Attn. Karen Wolfe  
MTSU PO Box 9  
Murfreesboro TN 37132

Name: _________________________________  
Email: ________________________________  
Address: _______________________________  
Phone: ________________________________  
City: _________________________________  
State: _________  
Zip Code _____________________________
**Important Upcoming Dates**

August 6 – Summer Graduation  
August 22 – First Day of Fall Semester Classes  
September 18 – Geosciences Fall Semester Cookout at Jefferson Springs (Alumni Invited – Invitations will be emailed in August)  
October 9 to 15 – National Earth Science Week  
October 15 – Homecoming Tailgate (Alumni Invited – Invitations will be emailed in September)

**Alumni and Friends – Mentoring and Giving!**

The faculty sincerely hopes that you also will consider making a one-time or recurring gift to our student scholarship fund. **Funding student scholarships is the number one financial priority for the Department of Geosciences!! We cannot do this without your support.** As MTSU Geosciences expands its teaching and research programs, the Department attracts an increasing number of highly qualified students interested in geoscience careers. Unfortunately, the rising cost of a college education is the determining factor for many students in deciding whether or not to pursue and complete their degrees. Please consider making a contribution to one of the scholarship funds named in the honor of retired Geosciences faculty members: **Dr. Ralph Fullerton, Dr. Burt Bordine, Dr. Albert Ogden and Mr. Paul O’Farrel.** Making a one-time or recurring gift to these scholarship funds is easy through our giving website: [http://www.mtsu.edu/supportgeosciences](http://www.mtsu.edu/supportgeosciences)

**Thank you for your support of MTSU Geosciences!**