Department Update
The most significant change for the Department over the past year is its move from the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) to the College of Basic and Applied Sciences (CBAS). This move provides increased support for growing enrollments in the Department’s geology and physical geography programs. With an undergraduate enrollment of over 100 majors and a rapidly growing master’s degree program (20 students), the Department was in need of greater financial and administrative support than could be provided by CLA. An immediate benefit of moving to CBAS is that in Spring Semester 2017, the Department will relocate to newly renovated classrooms and laboratories in Davis Science Building. Renovation of Davis is part of a $27 million project to bring Geosciences facilities to the highest standards possible. This investment in Geosciences by CBAS Dean Bud Fischer, Provost Brad Bartel and President Sidney McPhee is evidence of the University’s commitment to provide the faculty and students the absolute best teaching and research facilities possible. Future newsletters will contain updates on the Department’s new campus home. For now, please click on the following link to read a MTSU News article on renovation of Davis and Wiser-Patton: http://www.mtsunews.com/davis-wiser-patten-await-renovations/

Left: Dr. Jeremy Aber inspects renovation progress to new geospatial research facilities in Davis Hall. The Geosciences renovation project includes three new discipline-specific teaching labs, two new introductory teaching labs, a renovated lecture hall, two renovated classrooms, a new geospatial research lab, numerous faculty research labs, student common areas, and renovated faculty offices. All teaching labs and classrooms will be equipped with the very latest instructional technology. Completion of this project in Spring Semester 2017 will give MTSU Geosciences some of the best teaching and research facilities in the southeastern United States, and is evidence of the MTSU administration’s long-term commitment to the Department’s faculty, students and alumni.
**Student News**

Future newsletters will highlight individual student accomplishments. For now, the faculty wants you to know that our 120 students continue to fill Geosciences undergraduate and graduate courses and are active in both research and community service. In Fall Semester 2015, the faculty will welcome nineteen new freshman and undergraduate transfer students, as well as several new graduate students. The MTSU Geosciences student chapters of Sigma Gamma Epsilon and the American Institute of Professional Geologists perform numerous community service events and organize student trips to national and regional conferences. Our graduates continue to secure geoscience employment opportunities and to be accepted to graduate programs across the country. The faculty is especially proud that graduates of the MTSU professional science MS program have a 100% geosciences job placement rate.

Right: MTSU Geosciences students Nicole Ritchie, Elizabeth Gant, MTSU Geosciences alumnus Vanessa Bateman (center), and student Brandy Barnes represented the MTSU chapter of the American Institute of Professional Geologists at the meeting of the Southeastern Section of the Geological Society of America in Chattanooga. Students attended numerous conferences this year, including national meetings of the GSA, AGU, and the Biennial meeting of Sigma Gamma Epsilon.

Left: MTSU petrology students visited Johnson’s Shut-In State Park in Missouri in April to study Precambrian volcanic rocks. In recent years, the Department has placed increased emphasis on the role of field trips in the undergraduate curriculum. Beginning with the 2015-16 year, the Department will receive recurring MTSU field trip funding.
Faculty and Staff News
Each future newsletter will highlight an individual faculty member’s teaching and research program. This first issue updates you on current faculty/staff and their areas of teaching and research expertise. Contact information is at: http://mtsu.edu/geosciences/faculty.php

Jeremy Aber, PhD – Geographic Information Systems, Remote Sensing
Mark Abolins, PhD – Structural Geology, Field Geology, Earth Science Secondary Education
Pat Boda, PhD – Cartography, Biogeography, Environmental Geography and Sustainability
Alan Brown, MS – Earth Science
Laura Collins, MS – Earth Science
Warner Cribb, PhD – Mineralogy, Petrology, Geochemistry
Racha El Kadiri, PhD – Hydrogeology, Hydrology, Remote Sensing, Natural Disasters
Clay Harris, PhD – Oceanography, Sedimentology, Environmental Geosystems
Jim Henry, PhD – Meteorology, Geomorphology, Remote Sensing, Climatology
Mike Hiett, MS – Earth Science
Zada Law, MS – Director, Fullerton Laboratory for Spatial Technology
Melissa Lobgeier, PhD – Historical Geology, Paleontology
Henrique Momm, PhD– Geographic Information Systems, Remote Sensing
Karen Wolfe – Administrative Secretary
Ron Zawislak, PhD – Geophysics

Alumni and Friends – Mentoring and Giving!
An important new initiative in the Department of Geosciences is greater involvement by both alumni and friends in the lives of our students. Please keep Karen.Wolfe@MTSU.edu updated with your current mail and email addresses. You are invited to join the MTSU Geosciences Facebook page, and to follow the Department on Twitter @MTSUGeosciences. Alumni and friends always are welcome to visit campus and to share their professional experiences with the students.

Michelle Luchenberger receives an alumni-funded Outstanding Achievement Award in Geosciences from Dr. Clay Harris and Dr. Mark Abolins at the third annual Geosciences Student Appreciation Dinner and Award Ceremony. The 2015 ceremony, was attended by over 120 students and family members.
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 tuition and fees is the determining factor for many students in deciding whether or not to complete their degrees. This is especially true for juniors and seniors. Beginning Spring Semester 2016, the Department will award new scholarships to outstanding rising juniors and seniors. These scholarships will be named in the honor of the following retired Geosciences faculty members: Dr. Ralph Fullerton, Dr. Burt Bordine, Dr. Albert Ogden and Mr. Paul O’Farrel. If just one-hundred Geosciences alumni and friends would give ten dollars per month to our scholarship fund, we could award $12,000 in scholarships for the 2016-17 academic year! 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)

**Upcoming Events**

**Colloquium:** The Department hosts an evening colloquium series at which geoscience professionals give presentations to our students. If you are interested in giving a colloquium presentation, please email (Warner.Cribb@mtsu.edu). A list of Fall Semester colloquium speakers is available at [http://mtsu.edu/geosciences/colloquium.php](http://mtsu.edu/geosciences/colloquium.php)

**Annual Department Cookout:** If you are in the Nashville area, please join us for our annual Department Cookout on Sunday, September 13 from noon to 5 pm at the Jefferson Springs group shelter on the banks of Percy Priest Lake. This is a great opportunity to talk to our students, visit with old friends, and meet new faculty members. Please RSVP to Karen.Wolfe@MTSU.edu, if you plan to come. Coordinates for the Jefferson Springs group shelter, located just off Jefferson Pike near Smyrna, are: 36°0’1”N, 86°28’22”W

**Homecoming:** This year’s homecoming game is against Vanderbilt on Saturday, October 3 at 6 pm. The Department will organize a tailgate on Walnut Grove for both MTSU and Vandy geoscience students, alumni, and fans beginning at 1 pm. Game tickets are available through [GoBlueRaiders.com](http://GoBlueRaiders.com). Please email Warner.Cribb@MTSU.edu for more information on the homecoming tailgate.