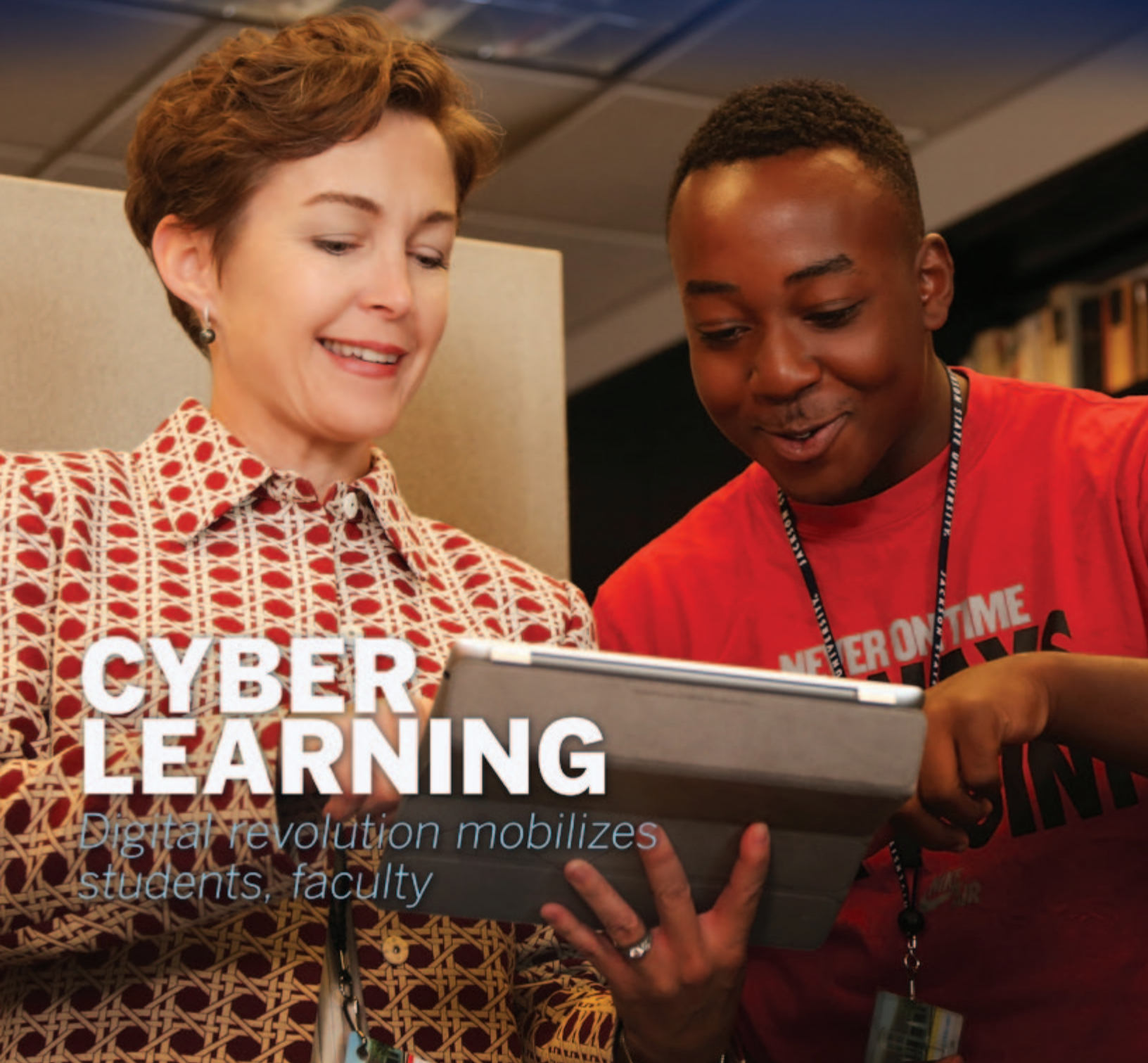


RESEARCHERS SECURE PATENTS | CREATE CENTER OPENS | APPLE, STARBUCKS, UPS JOIN CAMPUS

THE JACKSONIAN

SUMMER/FALL // 2014 // VOLUME 12 // NUMBER 2

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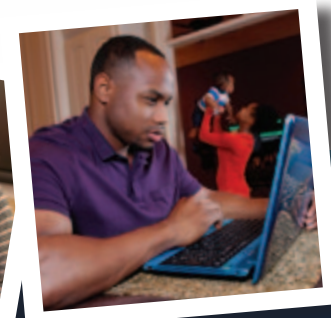
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CYBER LEARNING

Digital revolution mobilizes students, faculty

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SUMMER/FALL 2014
Volume 12, No. 2

12) Cyberlearning

Digital revolution mobilizes students, faculty

Mobile devices, wireless service, multi-touch textbooks, online courses, overseas connections. Such is the digital learning environment that is transforming Jackson State University's curriculum and campus at every level. From the ongoing iPad Initiative for freshmen to the recently opened INNOVATE Center for faculty and the nearly completed CREATE Center for students, JSU's international reputation as a cyberlearning pioneer continues to grow.

Cover photo by Frank Wilson

Cover art by D'Artagnan Winford

FEATURES



4) A school turned around

Monica Fabre, a JSU Ph.D. graduate, leads a failing Louisiana elementary school to state recognition for academic progress in her first year as principal.



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THE JACKSONIAN

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Dear Jacksonians,



At the beginning of every academic year, we witness the energy and excitement, hopes and dreams of a new class of Jacksonians eager to embark on their collegiate careers. This year, we welcomed a record-setting 9,508 students to Jackson State University. Notably, more than 40 percent of our students are enrolled in at least one online class, and 43 percent of our first-year students are male.

This could not have been achieved without the dedication of our enrollment management team with the support of our faculty, staff and alumni. I invite you to read more about this significant accomplishment and about this year's freshman class which brings a special "swagger" to campus.

One JSU has been my mantra, my clarion call. And, you have responded magnificently. Please read about Dr. Jimmie James and his outstanding generosity. It will inspire you. Another individual who epitomizes the JSU can-do spirit is Monica Fabre. You will learn how, in her first year as principal, she led a failing Louisiana elementary school to achieve state recognition for academic improvements, all while pursuing her Ph.D. at JSU. And, you will be uplifted by the story of Samone Poe, a recent honors graduate who launched a foundation to provide needy children with school supplies.

You will be pleased to learn of the great work being done by our alumni, including Vivian Brown of The Weather Channel and Shauna Collier, the head librarian of the Smithsonian Institution's new National Museum of African American History and Culture being built in Washington, D.C. We also want you to learn more about Dr. James Minor, who was recently appointed to the post of assistant secretary for higher education programs at the U.S. Department of Education by the Obama Administration.

Faculty and staff, of course, remain on the cutting edge of their fields. You will read about the patents earned by two of our professors and the intriguing proposals — from fighting cancer to creating an on-campus "Green Corridor" — put forth by our Presidential Creative Awards winners.

Finally, at the institutional level, there is the enthusiasm being generated by the launch of our CREATE Center in the H.T. Sampson Library. It will further expand our transformation into a cyberlearning university — a transformation that is garnering national attention.

Certainly, we have much to celebrate, as this edition of *The Jacksonian* shows. Enjoy your issue and share it with friends.

Sincerely,
 Carolyn W. Meyers
 President, Jackson State University



Dr. Carolyn W. Meyers enjoys meeting some "Baby Tigers" at the Lottie W. Thorton Early Childhood Development Center as she regales faculty and staff of the College of Education and Human Development with her own stories about teaching.

A SCHOOL TURNED AROUND

ONE PRINCIPAL, ONE YEAR

By BETTE PEARCE

When a sixth-grade teacher told Monica Fabre her son just couldn't grasp information, that he was slow, she "became an advocate for education at that very moment." She went online and to the library, plunging into every book she could find on teaching. "Today, my son is an honors student at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette," she says. "He's going to be a teacher like his mama." But Fabre didn't start out as an educator. The New Roads, La., native attended Grambling State University for a year before joining the Army, getting married and having two children. When her marriage ended in divorce, she went to work as a forklift operator, remarried and had another child. "I had proved my son could learn and that learning is more than just memorizing information," Fabre says. "I wondered, how many other kids out there need me, who need to be taught differently, who need to be motivated and gain self-confidence; to be told they can learn, they can succeed."

BACK TO COLLEGE

Fabre returned to college in 2003, received a bachelor's in secondary education in 2006, a master's in curriculum and instruction in 2009 and a second master's in educational leadership in 2011, all from Southern University in Baton Rouge. This spring, the 45-year-old received her doctorate in education administration from Jackson State University. She had interviewed for the doctoral programs at Vanderbilt and Howard universities, but one of her professors highly recommended Jackson State.

"When I came to interview for Jackson State's program, I walked around that campus, and I was just in awe of its beauty. It just immediately struck me as this is the place I need to be. The staff is remarkable. I wasn't just one more face in the crowd. Jackson State is more than a university. It's a family."

A NEW JOB

In 2012, after spending five years as a classroom teacher, Fabre was named principal of Rosenwald Elementary School in New Roads, a small, low-income community near Baton Rouge that she had attended as a child.

Fabre found the school was very different from the one she'd loved as a child. Rosenwald was ranked among the lowest academ-

ically and highest in discipline problems in the state. Academic performance and expectations were virtually nonexistent, she says.

The Rosenwald middle school and high school that Fabre graduated from were long since closed. All that remained was the elementary school with a student population that had dropped from almost 700 to about 350 over a six-year period. Parents were moving their children to other school districts. Daily attendance was about 75 percent. "Not once had Rosenwald met state achievements standards in the 14-year history of the Louisiana State Accountability System," Fabre says. Rosenwald seemed to be viewed as a lost cause, but to Fabre, "there are no lost causes, only big challenges."

At the end of the 2012-13 school year, the state Department of Education designated Rosenwald a "Top Gains School" for its overall 13.5 percent increase in academic performance from the previous year. Daily attendance had climbed to 94 percent.

Even with the impressive gain, Rosenwald remains a failing school, Fabre points out. "That's just how low the performance was. The fact remains, though, that the lowest-performing students achieved significant improvement. They can learn, and they can succeed," she said.

CHANGES

When Fabre arrived at Rosenwald, she took a deep breath and said a silent prayer as she entered the building. She was about to tackle one of the biggest challenges of her life. "I thought I'd walked into a prison," Fabre says. "The building was dirty and stuffy, and what paint was on the walls was deep blue and gray. Bars or grates covered every window. It was awful."

Fabre had the building cleaned and painted. Bars were removed to provide unobstructed views to the outdoors. She began overhauling the school's operation that would send many faculty, staff and parents reeling. "I had to make strong decisions, and I was not very well-liked," she says. "I fired some people, others quit. I had to remove key people from key positions, change schedules, make a lesson-plan structure and put together a 'Discipline with Dignity' policy. There were no policies in place when I got there, not one. I basically threw everything from the past out the window."

The Rosenwald faculty, she says, consisted largely of non-certified teachers who had no formal training in education other than a five-week, federally funded workshop. "Placing an unqualified teacher in an already low-performing school is just adding fuel to the fire," she says. "Just because you're a col-



Aluma Monica Fabre is principal of Rosenwald Elementary School in New Roads, La. Once one of the state's lowest-performing schools, Rosenwald was designated a Top Gains Schools by the state after only one year under Fabre's leadership.

lege graduate doesn't mean you can teach."

Fabre embarked on a teacher-recruiting mission. She went to job fairs and put the word out in other school districts she was recruiting teachers. The teachers who had remained at Rosenwald found Fabre also would serve as their teacher. "I'm not the traditional principal who sits behind a desk," she says. "I have my own classroom, and teachers who need help come to my classroom to observe me teaching. I wasn't just teaching kids, I was teaching teachers how to teach, and it worked out beautifully."

DISCIPLINE

Chaos had reigned at Rosenwald for years, Fabre says. "There was no discipline policy in place, no positive support intervention," Fabre says. Add to that, the pupils had no outlet for positive interaction or their energy. "They didn't have even one recess in an entire school day, and there were no extracurricular activities. Nothing," Fabre says. "That has changed."

Along with daily recess, the kids now can participate in several extracurricular activities. "We started a basketball team for fifth- and sixth-graders, a step team for girls, and we now have an active 4-H club," Fabre says. "One of our teachers happened

to be a music major, so we started a choral ensemble, too."

New Roads Chief of Police Kevin McDonald says it was not unusual for police to be called to the school several times a week to deal with behavioral issues. "We've had only one call this school year, and that didn't concern a student." A teacher's cell phone was stolen by an adult visitor. "We have a remarkable working relationship. She is a strong disciplinarian, and we work together well."

McDonald says Rosenwald now has a school resource officer who patrols the campus and helps diffuse problems. The officer also interacts with the kids, talking about bullying, drugs and other issues. Instead of criminalizing students for bad behavior, Fabre says, "we recognize them for good behavior."

Students in grades four, five and six who had behavioral issues but are turning around are recognized with a medal and chosen to act as "big buddies" to the younger kids, Fabre says.

While discipline is important, Fabre says, it's equally important to instill confidence in the children. "They are told every morning they are great. It's that attitude, that message that sets the tone for the day. And they're

told every day they are loved."

PARENTAL SUPPORT

When a winter storm forced area schools to close, LaShika Boulanger's fifth-grade daughter was disappointed. "She loves school, and she loves Miss Monica. She thinks Miss Monica's the greatest thing since sliced bread," Boulanger says.

Before Fabre became principal, students at Rosenwald were out of control, Boulanger says. "They were allowed to do whatever they wanted to do, and parents were allowed to come in and raise all kinds of things. Now, a parent is required to come in, but for a conference about their child and that sort of thing. It's a lot different.

"She's outspoken, but she speaks for the kids," Boulanger says. "She's focused on what the children need for their education, she's very determined and fights for the kids. There isn't anything that she thinks those kids need that she isn't going to fight to get. She doesn't expect kids to go from an F to an A overnight. Their grades are going up slowly, but they're going up. I love everything she's done at that school." ■



STUDENT-LAUNCHED FOUNDATION PROVIDES SCHOOL SUPPLIES

By MARK BRABOY

A lot of children in dire need of school supplies are getting them, thanks to Samone Poe, a spring 2014 honors graduate who majored in English.

The Greenville, Miss., native was inspired to launch the Innovated Young Minds Foundation following several speaking engagements at schools in Jackson and her hometown. To date, the foundation has raised about \$1,200 for school supplies in those school systems. The search for donors and grants to continue the work is an ongoing process, she said.

A conversation with an 8-year-old girl who loves school and excels in academics, Poe said, was the impetus for the foundation.

"I was inspired by this little girl. She's a straight-A student, but she was just talking to me, saying that it's hard for their momma to buy them school supplies and stuff because her mom is a single parent, and she really can't afford it. There were times when the bills would overshadow the stuff that they needed so she would probably go to class with one pencil, one tablet and that's it," said Poe, who has enlisted her peers to help raise money.

Poe said she understands the struggles being faced by the little girl's family and so many other households. Her own parents, Vanessa and Stanley Poe, were injured in separate work-related incidents. With two brothers also to provide for, money is tight.

"My dad got hurt at work, and my mom is currently hurt. I kind of thought ... that little girl's situation could be my little brothers'.


So it was kind of touching because I always had a soft side for kids," said Poe.

Indeed, she does. Active on campus, Poe serves as an Essence of a Lady Tiger mentor and worked as an intern with *Essence Magazine* in New York City this summer. She volunteers at Stewpot, a local community center for the homeless and others in need. She also raises money for St. Jude Children's Hospital and is involved with the local Boys and Girls Clubs and the Better off in College outreach program.

"What I do is go to the different schools," she said of the latter program. "I let them know that they can't let any obstacle distract them. You come here for one reason and that is for academics. Your goal is to stay focused."

She also talks to upperclassmen about going to college, a conversation many could never dream of having with their own families, she said. At the end of each speaking event, she gathers contact information and follows up, frequently helping students fill out college applications and look for money to pay for school.

"People do not know their background," she said. "You have kids in school who have been raped, they're not eating at home, their parents are abusing them, they don't have a mother or a father. With stuff like that happening in their households, they don't feel worthy enough to even birth a dream. That's why I go. You have to let them know that there is someone who cares about them." ■

A close-up portrait of Samone Poe, a Black woman with short dark hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a vibrant, multi-colored striped top and large gold hoop earrings. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a building and trees.

“I was inspired by this little girl. She’s a straight-A student, but she was just talking to me, saying that it’s hard for their momma to buy them school supplies and stuff because her mom is a single parent, and she really can’t afford it.”

Samone Poe,
Founder of Innovated Young Minds

the blueprint
one tiger
one roar
JSU Homecoming 2014

Tiger fans from all parts of the globe gathered in Jackson to bring alive this year's Homecoming theme, "The Blueprint: One Tiger! One Roar!" Homecoming activities included a worship service hosted by New Jerusalem Church, the coronation of Miss JSU, a comedy show, Yard Fest, the Friday night Greek show, the Society of Golden Tigers Homecoming Reunion Luncheon, and the not-to-be-missed Homecoming Parade, which was routed through our beautiful campus. This celebration was embraced by the entire city of Jackson and by Tiger fans everywhere. We are One JSU. 🐅

- Miss JSU Anissa Butler is crowned 1
- The Sonic Boom marches down the plaza 2
- Alphas step at HC 2014 3
- JSU WR Daniel Williams hauls in a pass over a MVSU defender 4
- Zeta Phi Beta performs during the HC step show 5
- JJ Williams hosts the HC Comedy show 6



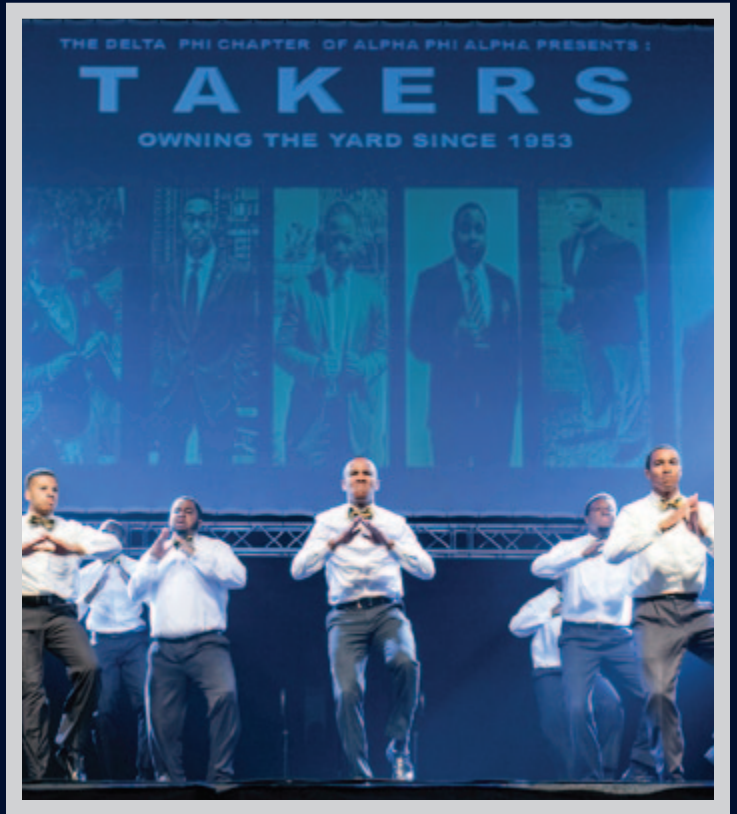
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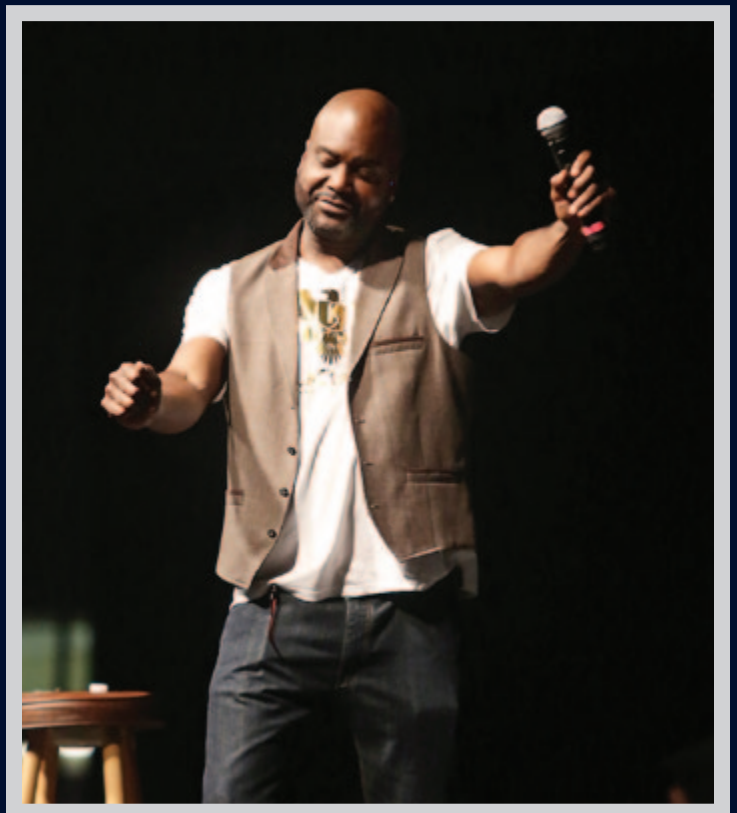
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CSET OFFERING 4 NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS



Dr. Richard Aló, dean, College of Science, Engineering and Technology



Dr. James C. Renick, provost and senior vice president for Academic and Student Affairs



U.S. Department of Labor statistics show the demand is strong for engineers in the disciplines that new JSU programs cover.



Labor statistics show biomedical engineering ranks third as the fastest-growing occupation in the country.

By SHELIA BYRD

The Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning approved Jackson State University's proposals to offer a Ph.D. in Engineering, a Ph.D. in Computational and Data-Enabled Science and Engineering, a Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering and a Bachelor of Science in Statistics. The Ph.D. in Chemistry was the last CSET doctoral program approved by IHL in 1996.

The Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Engineering will be the only undergraduate program currently offered in the state. The U.S. Department of Labor projects that the need for statisticians will grow by 25 percent by 2018.

"The programs are consistent with the mission of JSU to produce graduates capable of addressing critical challenges in our society," said JSU President Carolyn W. Meyers.

The Ph.D. in Engineering's emphases include computer engineering, industrial engineering, electrical engineering, computational engineering, civil engineering, environmental engineering and geological engineering.

U.S. Department of Labor statistics show the demand is strong for engineers in the disciplines that the program covers, from 5

percent for electronics engineers to 22 percent for environmental engineers. The trend indicates a need for engineers with terminal degrees who can either join the workforce or become educators to support such a need.

Dr. James C. Renick, provost and senior vice president for Academic and Student Affairs, said the program would significantly enhance the university's engineering research capability, which is consistent with the designation of JSU as a "high-research activity" institution by the Carnegie Foundation. "This new program should facilitate increased research conducted by our faculty and doctoral students," Renick said.

The Computational and Data-Enabled Science and Engineering program includes the disciplines of biology, chemistry, computer engineering, computer science, civil and environmental engineering, industrial engineering, manufacturing engineering, materials science and engineering, physics, mathematics, technology, public health, economics, finance and other non-STEM disciplines.

This initiative is in response to The White House's Big Data Priority plan. The plan is designed to enhance the nation's capabilities to create knowledge from its vast and rich

data resources that will lead to major societal benefits such as cancer cures, new engineering designs and better weather prediction.

Labor statistics show biomedical engineering ranks third as the fastest-growing occupation in the country. In Mississippi, the employment of biomedical engineers is projected to increase by 80 percent by 2018, which is above the national average. The Biomedical Engineering Program also fits with the state's plan for a healthcare corridor in Jackson.

The Bachelor of Science in Statistics will help increase the number of students seeking degrees in the STEM academic fields and the number receiving STEM degrees. It also will improve the potential for JSU graduates to land high-paying jobs in data sciences, said Dr. Richard Aló, dean of JSU's College of Science, Engineering and Technology.

"The program provides students with a strong foundation in mathematical and statistical methodology," Aló said. "The program will provide courses that prepare students for careers in business, government and private industry as statisticians and data scientists and for graduate training in statistics and related fields." ■

OPEN FOR BUSINESS



TIGER TECH @ JSU

When the idea of an Apple store on campus was in its beginning stages, JSU Vice President of Finance and Business Michael Thomas contacted Dr. Donald Causey, assistant professor, and Dr. Mary M. White, interim vice president for Institutional Advancement and chairperson of the Department of Entrepreneurship, to see if a team there would work on the project. “Dr. Meyers is pushing for excellence on campus, and our job is to bring the best to Jackson State,” explained Thomas.

Jevon Grant (pictured, left), a graduating senior in Entrepreneurship, said the experience was surreal. “We learned a lot about ourselves and each other — how to be a team and how to delegate tasks and make a collective push to advocate something that would cause change and growth.”

Joel Weathers (pictured, right), a graduating senior in Entrepreneurship, said the project allowed them “to be really creative and innovative. We were actually part of something that was bigger than ourselves.”

Tiger Tech @ JSU offers discounts to students, faculty and staff on Apple computers and products, such as iPads, iMacs, iPods and MacBook Pros, as well as many Apple accessories. Technical support is also available.

The grand opening of Tiger Tech @ JSU came only weeks after JSU’s designation by Apple Inc. as an Apple Distinguished School. The designation is reserved for institutions that meet criteria for innovation, leadership, and educational excellence, and demonstrate a clear vision of exemplary learning environments.

BIG BRANDS JOIN CAMPUS SCENE

Need an iPad or some technical advice about it? Have to get a package shipped immediately? Want a familiar cup of coffee to start the day?

Thanks to new stores that have opened within the last year, you can do all three without ever having to leave the campus of Jackson State University.

Tiger Tech @ JSU, the first Apple-authorized campus store in Mississippi, and UPS, with its first campus store in the United States, are now located in the Student Center. Meanwhile, nationally known coffee chain Starbucks can be found on the ground floor of the H.T. Sampson Library.

WOW Café American Grill & Wingery became the newest tenant at One University Place, opening in early October. It offers American food in a casual setting.

Dr. Carolyn W. Meyers, JSU president, called the series of store openings “a landmark moment, not only for us, but also the city of Jackson and the community.”

Jackson City Councilman Charles Tillman, who attended the ribbon cutting for Tiger Tech @ JSU, reiterated the sentiment. “We encourage entrepreneurship. We encourage economic development. We encourage business. We’re excited about all the things that are happening at Jackson State University.”

TIGER TECH

Student Center, 1st floor

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Website: www.jsums.edu/tigertechstore

UPS

Student Center, 1st floor

Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Website: www.jsums.edu/ups

STARBUCKS

H.T. Sampson Library, 1st floor

Hours: 8 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Monday–Friday, closed Saturday, 6–10 p.m. Sunday

WOW GRILL & WINGERY

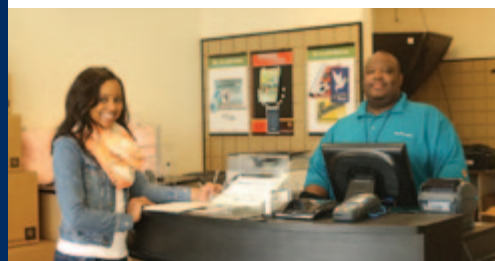
One University Place. Hours: 10:30 a.m.-11 p.m.

Monday-Thursday; 10:30 a.m.-midnight Friday; 11 a.m.-midnight Saturday; 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday.



STARBUCKS

Jackson State University unveiled its new Starbucks during a grand opening ceremony Jan. 24. Students, faculty and friends of JSU filled the room tasting everything from frappuccinos to veggie wraps. The facility provides space for meetings and social gatherings. SodexoMAGIC, the university’s food service provider, brought Starbucks to JSU.



UPS

JSU’s UPS Store franchise, which opened this past summer, is the first of its kind in the country. In collaboration with the JSU Development Foundation and the university, the store offers handling, distribution and processing of all campus mail and packages. The JSU Development Foundation uses part of the revenue to support scholarships and student and faculty initiatives.



WOW Grill & Wingery

Wow Grill & Wingery hosted a wing eating contest during Homecoming week in celebration of its grand opening.

CREATE

By L.A. WARREN

Jackson State University continued its tech revolution by officially unveiling its newest Cyberlearning initiative, CREATE, during a ribbon-cutting ceremony in the digital intellectual commons located on the first floor of the H.T. Sampson Library.

Create offers an opportunity for students to complete digital projects and assignments. It is a student component to INNOVATE, another cyberlearning development strategy that equips faculty with tools for designing, implementing and teaching courses.

Jasmine Douglas, a junior civil and environmental engineering major from Dallas, is a student coordinator for the new center. She says, "CREATE means the opportunity to do more because engineering majors must develop a senior design project. Now, we can discuss what it will be like, conceive and plan out projects using computer programs such as AutoCad and Photoshop to create in a 3-D space. We can take the knowledge we learn in class and create our own version of the concepts."

The event provided a showcase for students, who guided faculty, staff, peers and other guests on a tour of the facility. They displayed iPads, Mac desktops and explained the WiFi connectivity for sharing information via personal devices to television monitors.

President Carolyn W. Meyers described the unveiling of CREATE as a pivotal moment for JSU and its educational stakeholders. "No kids deserve an old education. This is the 21st century. This is a different world, and these are the people who are going to solve the problems," she said, adding that the university must do the very best it can to prepare students for the future.

Dr. Robert Blaine, special assistant to the provost for Cyberlearning, says CREATE'S technologically advanced ecosystem is a journey to new discoveries, opportunities and knowledge.

Blaine says another crucial benefit is that digital textbooks will cost significantly less for students.

SGA President Keonte Turner, a native of Benton Harbor, Mich., says CREATE is innovative and has the potential to boost the learning experience at JSU. "It's really pivotal for the trends of learning today," the senior biology/pre-med major said.

Turner envisions that cyberlearning will change the physical and digital landscape of the university for years to come by continually boosting student enrollment. He says he hopes technology will germinate throughout the campus to "cultivate and develop the growth of our students as one university."

CREATE officially opened Thursday, Sept. 10. ■

DR. ROBERT BLAINE

Special assistant to the provost for Cyberlearning



DR. INGRAD SMITH

Associate dean, College of Education and Human Development



CYBERLEARNING

DIGITAL REVOLUTION MOBILIZES STUDENTS, FACULTY

By SHELIA BYRD

With iPads and smartphones in hand, a group of freshmen roam from paintings to sculptures, snapping photos of the exhibits at Gallery1.

The art gallery located across from Jackson State University's main campus was one feature of the students' class assignment. The other was the digital device they used to record their experience and research the artists whose works were on display.

Michael Minor held up his university-issued iPad and recorded video of paintings by Danny Simmons. Minor said he would also use the device to find out more about Simmons, an abstract expressionist painter whose artwork features bright strokes of red and maize.

"I'm recording how I react to these exhibits," said Minor, who was working on an assignment in his University Success class. "My iPad helps me create layers. It's not like all I'm doing is writing about this experience."

Minor and the other students are part of what's become a transformative, digital learning environment at JSU. Examples of the university's digital conversion can be found in nearly every corner of the campus. Technology, specifically the use of mobile devices, is the key, said Dr. Robert Blaine, JSU's special assistant to the provost for Cyberlearning.

"Technology allows us to find information faster, but the 21st-century world requires that we actually turn that information into knowledge," said Blaine. "Technology builds a capacity for healthy skepticism of accepted wisdom. It prompts us to dig deeper, to look for primary sources and first-person accounts. It takes us on a process of discovery and challenges us to use language and images precisely."

JSU has emerged as a national leader when it comes to this learning approach. Representatives from other institutions, including Auburn and Jacksonville State,

have visited the campus to see firsthand how technology has been immersed in the curriculum.

Apple Inc. has recognized JSU as an Apple Distinguished School for 2013-2015. The designation is reserved for institutions that meet criteria for innovation, leadership and educational excellence, and demonstrate a clear vision of exemplary learning environments.

FACULTY-BASED INNOVATE CENTER

This spring, JSU held the grand opening for INNOVATE. The pristine space located on the ground floor of the H.T. Sampson Library is described as a one-stop shop for the creation and dissemination of digital content. CREATE, the student counterpart to INNOVATE, opened this fall.

Inside INNOVATE, four Department of Music faculty members sat at a table, interviewing prospective student musicians via Skype and a Mondopad.

Joycelyn Todd, a Stillman College senior who's applying for graduate school at JSU, played three selections for the group. She later said performing via Skype helped calm her nerves because otherwise "I'd be shaking in my shoes if I was doing this in person."

Dr. Darcie Bishop, former interim chair of the Department of Music and current interim associate dean of the Division of Graduate Studies, said the technology has the potential to change the way students are recruited and retained.

"We are able to audition music students in real time from other locales, thus broadening our reach. The opportunity to hear them perform, talk to them and ask them to play particular passages assists us in grasping a better sense of how they will fit into our musical environment," Bishop said. ■

“It’s exciting to imagine that our current students, with this technology, have the opportunity to participate in real-time master classes with professionals and students from other colleges and universities without ever leaving our INNOVATE lab,” she said.

The Cyberlearning Strategy began with the 2012 implementation of a scholarship program that provides iPads to all first-time, full-time freshmen. Faculty development has been integral to the development of the strategy. JSU educators who participated in the Global Inquiry Faculty Teaching Seminar (GIFTS) developed customized multi-touch books and iTunesU courses with the goal of creating active learning environments. Now, a group of faculty is at work redeveloping the entire General Education core, Blaine said.

STUDENT-BASED CREATE CENTER

“The new curriculum will coincide with the opening of Create, which is the center for project-based learning. With the opening of Create and the redesign of the curriculum, which happens through INNOVATE, we will have created a complete digital learning ecosystem and will be the first in the country to do so,” Blaine said. “We’ll be a model for the rest of the nation.”

For Dr. Ingrid Smith, associate dean in the College of Education and Human Development, the digital revolution has expanded the boundaries of her classes.

Smith recently co-edited a digital textbook, *Global Competency*. A chapter in her book is about the black market sale of infants in other countries. “The technology allows us to reach out to universities in those countries and have discussions with them about what’s actually occurring with the baby trade,” she said.

Another project underway in Smith’s University Success class is a good example of how technology allows students to create new knowledge, Blaine said.

“The students were studying the history of the university and decided to create their own video documentary about the 1970 police shooting of two young black men on the campus,” Blaine said. “They’re building their own knowledge through project-based learning. They’re producing the documentary themselves on all the events surrounding the shooting. They’re becoming historians. They are becoming writers.”

Luther Martin, a senior computer engineering major, said he couldn’t imagine successfully completing his coursework without using digital devices.

“I use mathematical apps and an app that helps you prepare for the GRE (Graduate Record Examinations),” Martin said. “There was a point in time when we were doing classwork without mobile devices. We didn’t know it was an inconvenience because we didn’t know anything else.”

That’s all changed for him.

“I was fairly average in high school compared to here. I wasn’t nearly as serious about education as I am now. In my spare time, I’m writing applications that could be used on mobile devices,” said Martin, who has a 4.0 GPA.

Martin also credits mobile devices with helping him earn an internship with the Boeing Co.

“As I was waiting for the interview to begin, I decided to look up information about software life cycles on my iPhone. As soon as I went into the interview, that was one of the questions she asked me,” Martin said. “It definitely gave me an edge.”

HIGHER LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT

Dr. Nola Radford, a professor and clinical supervisor in the College of Public Service, School of Health Sciences, Communicative Disorders, said mobile devices allow her to engage her students on a higher level than in a traditional lecture format.

Radford created a project that required students to investigate classic cases of child abuse neglect over the past several decades and then determine how technology and new pedagogy in the field of speech pathology might have informed those cases.

“I chose a classic psychological study that most people use in their classes. We used smartphones and tablets to look up information and immediately these YouTube clips came up. The documentaries let us investigate the actual doctors who were involved in the case. Now, we have the names and dates, and we were able to gather all of that within hours,” said Jalisa Greer, a first-year graduate student who completed Radford’s project.

Dr. Everett Neasman, who specializes in British literature, views the technology as a tool to bring other parts of the world into the classroom. Neasman wrote *Shakespeare’s Tragedies, Global Awareness through Dramatic Lenses*, a multi-touch book that uses *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Othello* to discuss foreign relations, interdisciplinary thought and cross-cultural studies. During a trip to China in 2013, Neasman used his book at Nanjing University.

He’s also created a blog about Shakespeare, which allows his students to interact with students at Nanjing University.

“The blog allows for an analysis of plays, such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Caesar*, from a global perspective,” Neasman said. “A lot of what the iPad and technology do is supplement what teachers and institutions have been doing for hundreds of thousands of years. It brings culture together.” ■




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NOVEMBER 3, 2014

The Apple Distinguished School designation is reserved for programs that meet criteria for innovation, leadership, and educational excellence, and demonstrate Apple's vision of exemplary learning environments. Jackson State is one of five public universities selected nationwide for this distinction.

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2014 PRESIDENTIAL CREATIVE AWARDS

FACULTY, STAFF RESEARCH PROPOSALS ON THE CUTTING EDGE

By SHELIA BYRD

The 2014 Presidential Creative Awards for Faculty and Staff features a number of intriguing projects, from the study of a plant's effect in reducing breast cancer tumors, to the role personality plays in career choice to a plan to showcase the "Green Corridor" on the JSU campus. President Carolyn W. Meyers, in announcing the Creative Awards winners, called the projects exceptional. Each of the 11 winning proposals received \$5,000 in funding. "The Creative Awards program continues to be a vehicle to ignite innovative thinking. The proposals covered a variety of disciplines, and some of them have global implications," Meyers said. "We will continue to look for ways to support the creative endeavors of our faculty and staff."

Other winning proposals will study iPad use among nontraditional students; will develop a GIS-based system to identify areas in Mississippi that are vulnerable to tornadoes; and will research the impact of skin color and hair texture on candidate evaluation. The strategic goal of the awards is to foster collaboration, innovation and creativity with a special emphasis on socio-cultural, health, behavioral, environmental, economic, educational, and technological issues. The projects also engage students in research methodology to develop their critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. ■



Duanjun Lu, Ph.D., assistant professor in the Department of Physics, Atmospheric Sciences and Geoscience, proposed the development of a GIS-based decision support system to examine tornado hazards and risks in Mississippi. Students will be responsible for data collection, result analysis and product presentation.



Yu-Chun Kuo, an assistant professor of Instructional Design and Development in the School of Lifelong Learning, proposed a project that aims to increase nontraditional students' motivation to learn with iPads and shape their attitudes toward mobile learning; explore nontraditional students' learning experiences with Apple apps in collaborative team learning and explore the effect of apps and instructor support on students' learning achievements.



Carolyn Howard, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Biology, proposed an inter-institutional collaboration between her breast cancer research team and Dr. Shehla Pervin, an assistant professor at Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles. Howard's project will study the full effect *vernonia amygdalina* (VA), an African plant, has on mammary cancer stem cells (MCSC). Specifically, the study will examine whether pre-treatment with VA will reduce the number of MCSC-induced xenografts in nude mice.



Gwendolyn Catchings, DBA, PHR, assistant professor in the Management and Marketing Department, proposed “A Pilot Study: The Personality Major Career Project ‘Know Thyself...Chart Thy Future.’” The project aims to assist freshmen undecided majors in choosing an appropriate major and career path based on personality type.

HuiRu Shih, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Technology, proposed the creation of a remote laboratory to extend the traditional hands-on access to labs and test instrumentation over the Internet. The project will deal with remote access to real lab instruments using computer and network technology.

Natarajan Meghanathan, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Computer Science, proposed the “Design and Development of a Local Spectrum Knowledge-based Minimal Channel Switch Routing Protocol for Cognitive Radio Ad hoc Networks.” He expects cognitive radios to be the next wave of wireless computing to exploit the licensed, wireless spectrum and maximize the efficiency of channel usage.

D'Andra Orey, Ph.D., a professor in the Department of Political Science, proposed “The Impact of Skin Color and Hair Texture on Candidate Evaluation.” Orey said scholars know little about whether African-American females’ natural hairstyles influence political cognition and behavior and specifically if hairstyle affects vote choice. The project will examine whether Afrocentric hairstyles enhance negative stereotypes.



Keith Collins, manager of JSUTV, **Heather Wilcox**, neighborhood development assistant, Center for University Development, **Marlin King**, assistant director of projects and construction management in the Department of Facilities and Construction Management, and **Mukesh Kumar, Ph.D.**, interim director of Urban and Regional Planning programs, proposed the creation of a digital simulation of the campus’ “Green Corridor” featuring a rain garden.

Glenda Windfield, Ed.D., assistant professor, Special Education in the College of Education and Human Development, **Tracy Harris, Ed.D.**, associate professor, Elementary Education in the College of Education and Human Development and **Brandi Newkirk-Turner, Ph.D.**, CCC-SLP, assistant professor, Communicative Disorders, College of Public Service, proposed a collaborative project that examines the role of teacher preparation programs in the clinical experiences.

Alamgir Hossain, Ph.D., associate professor in the Department of Chemistry, proposed the “Development of Molecular Sensors for Environmentally Relevant Anions.” The research will focus on the development of new molecular sensors for selective binding and recognition of environmentally important anionic species. There are several anions that have adverse effects on both the environment and health.

Evornia Kincaid, Ed.D., assistant professor in the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education, proposed the “Interdisciplinary Teacher Education Course Lab Approach to Increase Pre-Service Education Teachers’ Graduation Rate at an HBCU.” The research project lab is designed to improve passing rates on the certification tests and improve graduation preparation for education majors.



Dr. Kamal S. Ali's patent is for a system that monitors and evaluates unmanned aerial vehicles.

Dr. Hari Cohly's patent is for a new method of removing and preventing rust.

PATENT POWER

2 PROFESSORS NOTED FOR INVENTIONS

By SHELIA BYRD AND BETTE PEARCE

Two Jackson State University professors have been awarded patents for their groundbreaking work in the fields of engineering and biology.

Dr. Kamal S. Ali, a computer engineering professor, has been awarded a patent for his Hardware in the Loop Simulator (HILS) for small autopilots used in unmanned aerial vehicles or drones, and Dr. Hari Cohly, associate professor of biology, has been named an inventor on a patent for a new method of removing and preventing rust.

The work by the two men has wide-ranging implications for both commercial and military applications.

DRONES

Ali's HILS combines the best of software flexibility and hardware accuracy, providing the user with a powerful and realistic evaluation tool. The system allows the user to compare how a plane is flying under different autopilots and weather conditions. The project is a collaboration of JSU and the U.S. Army Research Laboratory. Ali teamed with student Justin Shumaker, who currently works for the Army Research Laboratory.

A copy of the system was delivered to the U.S. Air Force last December.

"I've been working on this for five years. When I came to JSU, I started doing research with unmanned aerial vehicles," Ali said. "It actually flies the plane inside the computer. You can look at the plane and tell how it's flying. If it crashes, you can just reset and do it again."

Ali received his Master of Science in Engineering from West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va., and his Ph.D. in Solid State Physics from Reading University, Reading, England.

RUST

Cohly, an associate professor of biology, says the patented technology developed to both prevent and remove rust employs a hydrogen-based gas. It is economical to produce, non-invasive, environmentally friendly and can be mass-produced. The process could revolutionize numerous industries that now must rely on current costly and labor-intensive rust removal methods, as well as prevent corrosion on objects ranging from small tools to automobiles, massive

bridges and ocean-going ships.

The potential savings to consumers and industry is incalculable.

"Just consider a company that cleans rust from the bottoms of huge ships. The ship must be pulled from the water, chemicals applied and then scraped. It takes a very long time and is very labor-intensive and costly," Cohly said.

When the gas developed by Cohly and his colleagues is applied to a corroded surface, the rust falls off, particle by particle. "There is no scraping, and you can then just vacuum up the rust that has fallen off," he said.

Colleagues also named on the patent include Bharat Subodh of India, Dr. Rajendram V. Rajnarayanan, of East Amherst, N.Y., and Hui Chu Tsai of Singapore.

A native of India, Cohly holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Toronto and a master's and Ph.D. in microbiology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He has done post-doctoral work at the University of Toronto, Baylor College of Medicine and NASA (Johnson Space Center) in Texas.

Dr. Loretta Moore, vice president for Research and Federal Relations, said university officials are excited about both projects. "Dr. Ali and Dr. Cohly are very passionate about innovation, and we are proud of their achievements," she said. "We are thrilled to be able to support our faculty, staff and students through the process, from idea to invention to commercialization." ■

Through its Technology Transfer and Commercialization unit, Jackson State University facilitates the invention disclosure and patent application process and provides both technical and financial support to ensure that the intellectual property rights to inventions are protected. For more information about the patent application process, contact the university's intellectual property manager, Almesha L. Campbell, at (601) 979-1815.



POLLING ILLUMINATES ISSUES SURROUNDING GUN CONTROL, POLICE RELATIONS, VOTER ID

By JIM EWING



Otha Burton, executive director of the Institute of Government

The Jackson State University Polling Center has released national survey results on a number of issues of interest, including gun control, police relations, trust in the judicial system, and voter identification requirements. Among them:

Gun Control: Nearly 50 percent of respondents feel that government is encroaching on the Second Amendment right to carry and own firearms. A significant majority of respondents (88.7 percent) feel they have a right to use a firearm in their home against an intruder. Nearly 30 percent nationally feel that tensions in places like Ferguson, Mo., would be lessened with more gun control legislation in place. However, while 7.2 percent believe there should be no controls on gun ownership, 79 percent support some licensing or restrictions on certain arms like assault rifles.


Police Relations: Just short of one-half of all respondents (47.6 percent) agreed with the statement: “Based on all that I know or have heard, African-Americans are justified when they report fearing the police.” Stop and frisk policies were supported by 68.1 percent of whites surveyed but only 38.6 percent of African-Americans. Younger respondents are significantly less likely to feel positively (57.4 percent) toward local police than those 40-64 years of age (73 percent) and 65-plus (80.9 percent). Younger respondents are three to

four times as likely to report being verbally abused or profiled by police than those 65-plus.

Trust in the Judiciary: While only 66 percent of Americans had strong trust in police departments, only 55.6 percent could say they had strong trust in the judicial system of courts, prosecutors and judges. Only 38.6 percent of African-Americans had trust in the system (48.6 percent for Hispanics; 61.9 percent among whites).

Voter ID: Only 18.6 percent of respondents suggested voter fraud is very serious in the United States. Another 11.9 percent felt that it was not serious at all. Most fell between the extremes (57.8 percent) and suggested that voter fraud was somewhat serious or not very serious.

The Polling Center operates under the auspices of the Jackson State University Institute of Government. The Institute serves and assists small-to-mid-size urban and regional communities.

The Institute of Government provides synergy that is channeled to meet service needs through community service and engagement, leadership development, training and education, and research and consulting. 

METHODOLOGY: The poll sampled opinions of 900 approximately proportional to state populations nationwide. The survey was conducted September 1-9, 2014. All surveys were conducted using an online survey instrument. The poll has a +/- 3.5 percent margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level on composite basis.



JSU GRAD JAMES MINOR NAMED DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY U.S. DEPT. OF EDUCATION

By JIM EWING

Jackson State University alumnus Dr. James T. Minor has advanced to a top U.S. Department of Education post in Washington, D.C., as deputy assistant secretary for higher education programs.

Minor, 40, JSU Class of '96, had previously served as senior program officer and director of higher education programs for the Southern Education Foundation in Atlanta, Ga.

He said he's excited about the new post, which provides overall leadership and administration of grants for institutions and other federal programs that promote equal access to — and excellence in — postsecondary education.

"One of the things I'm most excited about in assuming this post is I believe the leadership exhibited by this administration is unprecedented," he said of the Barack Obama administration.

"I absolutely think it's unprecedented as far as access, affordability and degree completion in postsecondary education." Minor grew up in Detroit but came South for higher education at Jackson State, mainly due to affordability. But he said it left a lasting impact on him.

Particularly, he said, he is grateful for "the leadership development and opportunities at Jackson State," and "the shared experience with students from different backgrounds — many of them the first to attend college."

Those JSU experiences have stayed with him, he said, since these are the students he is trying to reach in his new job: those coming to a college or university for the first time, often from a diverse and perhaps disadvantaged background. Outreach to such students and ensuring they receive a quality education is essential, he believes.

Minor received his bachelor of science degree at JSU in sociology, a master's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and his Ph.D. in educational leadership and policy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

He was tapped by the Obama administration to fill the post in June. ■

Librarian extraordinaire

Smithsonian appointment opens new chapter

By BETTE PEARCE

Alumna Shauna Collier has been chosen to supervise one of the most prestigious libraries in the nation, the Smithsonian Institution's new National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C.

The \$500 million museum, under construction on the National Mall, is to open in 2015. Until then, Collier and other museum staffers are working from the current African-American gallery in the American History museum.

The library is the first within a Smithsonian museum that will be accessible to the public. Collier will develop, manage and lead the library staff and serve as an expert in information research in the history and culture of African-Americans. "The library will share space with the museum archives and house roughly 20,000 volumes in a core collection of print resources," Collier said. "The collection will include the major topics in African-American studies, but I'm especially excited about family history and genealogy."

Interest in family histories among African-Americans continues to grow, and providing assistance in genealogy research will be a component of the new library, Collier said.

The new Smithsonian museum was designed by renowned African-American architect Phil Freelon of Durham, N.C., who also designed the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum being constructed in Jackson that is scheduled to open in 2017.

For the 49-year-old Collier, the Smithsonian appointment means she's moved into her "dream job," as the local library was her favorite place growing up in Clarksdale, Miss.

Collier studied marketing at JSU, which she thought

would satisfy her appetite for research. "I always loved libraries, and I practically lived in libraries, but it wasn't books themselves so much as it was finding answers," Collier said.

After graduating from JSU in 1986, she spent 10 years working as a marketing executive for a publishing company in Atlanta and California.

After reading an article about how today's libraries are transforming into high-tech research centers, she wrote to the American Library Association to learn what is required to be a librarian. After earning her master's degree in library and information studies from the University of Alabama, she held positions at a museum in Atlanta and at a library in Savannah, Ga., before being hired as librarian for the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum in Washington, D.C. Later, she became a librarian for the Stone Center for Black History and Culture at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Collier had been at UNC for five years when she learned the position of supervisory librarian for the new African-American museum was open. "It was my dream job, so I applied even though I really didn't think I would get it." She was hired in December 2013.

Dr. Robert Luckett, director of Jackson State University's Margaret Walker Center, said the museum and Collier's appointment is exciting for those who care passionately about African-American history. The fact that a JSU graduate is heading the leadership team "is a great honor for her and makes all of us at JSU proud," Luckett added. "Her role there will be vital, her work will be incredibly important."





Vivian Brown visits the JSU Digital Media Center to provide hands-on lessons to meteorology students.

A Sunny Forecast



Weather Channel veteran and JSU alum celebrates meteorology program's progress

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
82°	82°	79°	75°	76°	84°	80°

By SHELIA BYRD

Vivian Brown, a groundbreaking meteorologist on The Weather Channel, says she spearheaded a project to feature Jackson State University on the national broadcast because she's impressed with the progress that's been made in Jackson State University's meteorology program.

Brown, a 1986 graduate of JSU, returned to the campus with a film crew in February for a Black History Month special about JSU that aired on The Weather Channel that month.

"At this time, Jackson State educates a quarter of the black meteorologists in the country," Brown said. "I wanted the world to know that what Jackson State offers and delivers is as good as, if not better, than any other institution in the country."

Brown said when she was a student some 30 years ago, the meteorology program was strictly science-based, with no broadcast emphasis. She said all of her classes focused on physics, atmospheric science and math. She wanted to go into research and become a forecaster, perhaps, for the National Weather Service. Instead, during a visit to Atlanta for a senior-year project, she found out about "a new company that was going to have 24-hour weather," she said.

Brown began her career at The Weather Channel in 1986 as a forecaster in its Global Forecast Center. She was responsible for analyzing current weather conditions, interpreting radar and creating graphics for the network.

In 1988, she moved into the role of on-camera meteorologist, becoming the first African-American female in the position. For years, JSU has touted her among its

top alums because of her accomplishments, and she was selected to serve as the Founders' Day speaker in October 2013. Soon after that visit to the campus, Brown began pushing for a feature on the meteorology program.

"It was my vision to highlight the entire meteorology program. I was glad to see the university has made so much progress in embracing the broadcasting curriculum as it relates to meteorology, just as other universities across the country have done," she said.

Beginning in 1975, JSU was the only historically black college or university offering a meteorology program. Today, students in the program have access to meteorological observing equipment, computing platforms and laboratories. They also have WeatherVision, a service located at the Mississippi e-Center @JSU that provides weathercasts to more than 100 stations nationwide.

The site is the perfect training ground for future broadcast meteorologists. While in Jackson, Brown offered advice to meteorology students on how to deliver forecasts in front of the green screen at WeatherVision.

"I can't describe how great it was to meet Ms. Brown. She's been an inspiration to me ever since I decided I wanted to be a meteorologist," said Lenetta Mallory, a freshman from Landover, Md., who was featured in the JSU segment that aired on The Weather Channel.

Kantave Greene, an instructor in the meteorology program, said Brown "represents the aspirations of many African-Americans who dream of becoming a meteorologist and provides hope to those wishing of having a successful career as a broadcast meteorologist." ■

Meteorology Program looks forward to 40th anniversary

In September, visiting Jackson State University alumni employed with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) started planning for next year's 40th anniversary celebration of the JSU meteorology program.

Over the years, the commitment between JSU and the NOAA Center for Atmospheric Sciences (NCAS) has

netted the university more than \$2 million in grant funding. As well, JSU's program has produced 30 percent of the national weather service African-American meteorologists. Eighty-four students have graduated from JSU and work in various fields, including The Weather Channel. ■

\$589K HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT WILL PREPARE STUDENTS FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CAREERS

Jackson State University has won a \$589,000 Scientific Leadership Award from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to bolster its Emergency Management Technology program. The grant will fund collaborative interdisciplinary efforts to promote and encourage undergraduate students to pursue a bachelor's degree in Homeland Security-related Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (HS-STEM) field. The EMT program is designed to ensure that students have the skills needed to manage a crisis.

"This is a team effort, in collaboration with different departments," said Technology Department Professor Dr. Pao-Chiang Yuan, Ph.D., principal investigator for the grant.

To be spread over five years, the SLA grant for Minority Serving Institutions Granting Bachelor Degrees will fund

two phases. The first primarily will go toward developing new courses – including remote sensing and social media technologies – as well as upgrading laboratories. The second phase will increase recruitment and exposure of the EMT program as well as continue to strengthen ties with the Department of Homeland Security Coastal Hazards Center of Excellence (DHSCOE) housed at JSU.

Yuan said he was especially grateful for all the support from the dean's office DHSCOE Director Dr. Robert Whalin and team members Dr. F.C. Dancer and Dr. April Tanner of the Computer Science Department; Dr. H.R. Shih and Dr. Jessica Murphy of the Technology Department; and Dr. Duanjun Lu of the Physics Department.

The EMT program was approved in fall 2010 and began admitting students in spring 2011. ■

JACKSON STATE HOSTS INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIOMEDICAL SYMPOSIA

By ERIC STRINGFELLOW



Dr. Paul Tchounwou, associate dean, College of Science, Engineering and Technology

More than 20 countries were represented at the 11th International Symposium on Recent Advances in Environmental Health Research and the 13th International Symposium on Metal Ions in Biology and Medicine, hosted by Jackson State University.

The four-day conference was held at the Jackson Convention Complex in September.

Dr. James C. Renick, provost and senior vice president for Academic and Student Affairs, greeted attendees saying, "We are glad you are here. I am delighted to see so many students and faculty. I want to welcome our visitors from around the world."

Renick cited the recent media attention to the Ebola virus in thanking the scientists and researchers for their long-term work.

"The media have a short attention span. It will be on to something else next week. You have been doing this for a very long time, and we thank you for that," Renick said.

Dr. Paul Tchounwou, a presidential distinguished professor and associate dean of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology, was the key organizer and chair of the symposia. "The conference's overarching objective is the continued promotion of interdisciplinary discussions and international scientific collaborations and to increase awareness of key environmental and public health issues facing the global community," he said.

For the past decade the symposium has been an important platform for sharing major contributions to global research and education in environmental science, biomedicine and public health.

More than 50 invited speakers presented; poster sessions for faculty and professional students and another for students were held; and more than 200 abstracts were submitted. ■




Danny Simmons Jr. reads from his book, *I Dreamed My People Were Calling But I Couldn't Find My Way Home*.

'I Dreamed My People Were Calling'

Gallery1 hosts Simmons exhibit, reading

Daniel "Danny" Simmons Jr., renowned painter, poet and art impresario, visited Gallery1 at Jackson State University in February in conjunction with a solo exhibition of his work, *I Dreamed My People Were Calling But I Couldn't Find My Way Home*. Along with the series of original paintings and digital artwork created over the course of eight years, pieces from Simmons' personal collection of Central and West African art were on display.


Simmons, the brother of hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons and rapper Joseph Simmons, known as "Rev. Run" of Run-D.M.C. fame, also is a writer. During his visit, he signed copies of his books, including *I Dreamed My People Were Calling But I Couldn't Find My Way Home* and *Three Days As The Crow Flies*, a fictional account of the 1980s New York art scene.

Guests also had the opportunity to engage with Simmons in a one-on-one dialogue during "Conversations with the Artist and Poetry Reading." 

Like Fine Wine

Jackson State University's Department of Speech Communications and Theater presented the play "Like Fine Wine," a story about dreams that never die, this fall at the Rose E. McCoy Auditorium.

The story revolves around Caleb "Sax" Sanders, a blue-collar cab driver from Memphis, who was once on the brink of breaking into the business as a famous jazz musician. Life threw him a curveball, and he was forced to put his dreams on hold. An old friend visits him on his 50th birthday and sees a once-renowned musician a shell of his former self. Is it too late for Caleb to pursue his once-deferred dream? Or will he be content with memories and what-ifs?

Prince Duren, a 2009 Jackson State University graduate who is now a visiting instructor at the university, wrote the play. Duren received a bachelor's degree in mass communications at JSU and a master of fine arts at the University of Arkansas. 



U.S. Rep. Alan Nunnelee visits with JSU President Carolyn W. Meyers and students.

The Washington connection

Congressman visits campus

U.S. Rep. Alan Nunnelee, R-Miss., paid a visit to Jackson State University, stopping in a liberal arts classroom and touring the Veteran's Services Center, Community College Relations Office, the College of Engineering, Science and Technology and the INNOVATE Cyberlearning Center.

"I want to know what's going on here. I want to know what your challenges are and how I can help," Nunnelee said.

During the visit, JSU President Carolyn

W. Meyers updated Nunnelee about the progress JSU had made since the Ayers college desegregation settlement, including the expansion of engineering programs and plans for a School of Public Health. Meyers also touted JSU's designation as an Apple Distinguished School, one of only five such higher education institutions in the country, and discussed how the university is emerging as a national leader when it comes to cyberlearning. [▶](#)

‘ARTISTIC INTENSITY’

College of Liberal Arts promotes inaugural visual and performing arts series

The Jackson State University College of Liberal Arts kicked off its 2013-2014 *Get Ready for Artistic Intensity* Visual and Performing Arts Series last fall.

The inaugural series brought to Jackson an array of high-caliber professional visual and performing artists from around the world. Nine signature events — covering music, dance, art, photography, theater and lecture — along with related performances and exhibits by JSU faculty and students, were scheduled from September through April at JSU’s Rose E. McCoy Auditorium, art galleries and venues on campus.

The series opened with *Horizon Realm: Contemporary Art from Taiwan*.

Painting, sculpture, installation, video and photography by 10 Taiwanese artists emphasized contemporary issues facing Taiwanese society. *Scottsboro Boys: Outside the Protective Circle of Humanity*, *The Fred Hiroshige*

Photographs documented courtroom proceedings during one of the trials of the infamous case in 1933 Alabama. Also on exhibit was art by Daniel “Danny” Simmons Jr., the co-founder of Def Poetry Jam, who visited campus for a reading and book signing.

The series also featured a performance by **Step Afrika!**, the first professional company dedicated to the tradition of stepping, and music from Grammy-nominated **Imani Winds**, one of the most successful chamber music ensembles in the U.S. **Black Violin**, another group offering a blend of classical, hip-hop, rock, R&B and bluegrass music, made an appearance, too. Springtime brought a favorite event, **Jazz on the Plaza**, to the campus.

The series also brought journalist and civil rights activist **Charlayne Hunter-Gault** to campus for the 2014 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Convocation. **■**

Grammy-nominated Imani Winds appears at Jackson State University as part of the inaugural *Get Ready for Artistic Intensity* Visual and Performing Arts Series.





'MAGIC' LIVES UP TO NICKNAME

By JIM EWING

Basketball legend and successful entrepreneur Earvin "Magic" Johnson lived up to his nickname during a visit to Jackson State University, casting a spell on audiences of students, faculty and staff for several hours.

Johnson held a series of meetings, including one with students, at the College of Business where he shared secrets to his business success and urged them to take a chance on themselves.

"Celebrity hurt me," he said. "Ten banks turned me down."

The bankers only wanted his autograph and to have their pictures taken with him. "He knows basketball," Johnson said they thought of him, but questioned "can he run a business?"

He admitted that he had to learn how to be a businessman but has now built Starbucks and TGI Friday's franchises, movie theaters, food distributing companies, a television network, a \$1 billion real estate fund, a media company and other businesses.

"You have to know what you don't know," he said, to be successful. Hire people "who are smarter than you" to do the things they know how to do. Research what could form a successful business and execute your plan.

His businesses are aimed at minorities in urban areas where there is demand but little competition. African-Americans have \$1 trillion in spending power, as do Latinos, he said.

"If I can do what I did, you can do it, too," he said.

Everywhere he went, students wanted to take "selfies" with him — and he obliged them.

At the Walter Payton Recreation & Wellness Center, he met with student athletes and gave them advice on how to excel in sports — a subject he also knows well as a former member of the "Dream Team" that won the 1992 Gold Medal in the Olympics.

Among his tips: "The best athletes are the hardest workers in practice," he said.

"When everybody else was at the club, I was giving my time in practice," he told them. So when the game day came, he was on the court, not the bench.

His most heartfelt moment came while meeting with students at Rose E. McCoy auditorium.

In answer to a Twitter question from #MagicAtJSU on @JacksonStateU, he said the hardest thing he ever had to do in his life was drive home and tell his wife who was pregnant with his son at the time that he was HIV positive. Watching her cry, he said, "was the worst moment of my life."

He said his wife Cookie reared back and gave him a "Mike Tyson"-like punch — hard! — and then said, "We're going to beat this."

They got on their knees and prayed.

That was 23 years ago, he said, and each day is a blessing to him.

It's important to "protect yourself" and "educate your partner," he said.

In answer to another question, he said: "Changing urban America, putting people of color to work and showing that we can be successful, that's important to me."

"You should be happy," he told the students. He was the first person in his family to go to college, he said, like many in the audience.

Pointing to JSU President Dr. Carolyn W. Meyers and others, he said everyone on that stage was there to help them. "You've got to take advantage of this opportunity at this university."

"And when you get out, be a great alum, give money," he said, so others can have that opportunity for an education and a better life, too. **Q**



JSU TOPS IN ACADEMICS FOR SWAC ATHLETES

By JIM EWING

Jackson State University led the list with the number of student-athletes maintaining a 3.0-plus GPA in the South-west Athletic Conference while competing in their respective sports, according conference officials.

Four SWAC member institutions had more than 120 student-athletes represented on the SWAC All-Academic Team for their academic prowess. Jackson State University led the group with 173, followed closely by Alabama State University (158), Mississippi Valley State University (135) and Prairie View A&M University (126).

Despite previous difficulties with academic progress rates, JSU has been steadily improving over the past four years in football and made great strides in men's basketball.

The feat is no small one considering some very sobering national statistics.

A study released by the NCAA late last year showed only 61 percent of African-American male student-athletes who entered college in 2005 successfully graduated within six years, a stark comparison to the 81 percent of white student-athletes who graduated in the same time. And while the graduation success rates have increased across the board, a disparaging gap remains.

The NCAA's new policies mandate that programs carry over a 930 APR rating in order to be eligible for NCAA championships by 2015-16. Jackson State is one of the

SWAC institutions that has excelled across the board. It has an institutional average APR rating of 960 with the second highest football and men's basketball ratings in the league.

The Division I Board of Directors recognized the unique struggles of limited resource institutions and amended the benchmarks for APR compliance. The SWAC has since stepped in to help members meet the new requirements.

Included in the league's initiatives is an APR Task Force created in August 2012. Its 12 members are athletic directors, senior woman administrators, compliance officers, faculty athletic representatives, and academic advisors.

GradesFirst, a web-based student performance monitoring software system, also was provided to all 10 SWAC institutions. The application allows academic advisors, administrators, and faculty to communicate and provide student services.

In coordination with the NCAA, SWAC also distributes information about grants and programs available to help bring institutions into compliance.

The All-Academic Team is representative of the SWAC's progress in increasing training and focusing its shift toward the academic success of its student-athletes. ■



RECITAL HALL NAMED IN HONOR OF DR. JIMMIE JAMES JR.

By ERIC STRINGFELLOW

The generosity of Jimmie and Carrie James has been memorialized by Jackson State University through the naming of the Recital Hall in the F.D. Hall Music Center in Dr. Jimmie James Jr.'s honor.

James served as chair of the Department of Music and as the voice of JSU's marching band. The Jimmie James Jr. Recital Hall was formally dedicated recently during a ceremony at the Rose H. McCoy Auditorium.

An overflow crowd of JSU administrators, faculty, staff, alumni, students, community supporters and friends attended the festivities. The university's marching band—the Sonic Boom of the South—also performed.

"I am very humbled by this entire experience of receiving the honorable recognition and having the recital hall named in my honor," James said. "I will forever be grateful for having my name permanently and visibly displayed for others to see."

James and his wife endowed a scholarship which will be matched through university resources.

Jackson State President Carolyn W. Meyers said the university's tribute to James was fitting.

"Dr. James, we are extremely proud that you have chosen to leave your indelible mark on this campus, and it is only fitting that the place where you spent most of your time nurturing students and making dreams come true will now bear your name," Meyers said.

James always will be fondly remembered as the voice of "the summa cum laude of bands," — JSU's Sonic Boom of the South. During his 43-year tenure at Jackson State, James also served as director of musical activities, coordinator of the Graduate Music Program, director of the concert band, assistant band director, and director of the brass ensemble.

Dr. Deborah Barnes, interim dean of the JSU College of Liberal Arts, applauded James for his commitment to community.

"I have come to know that Dr. James didn't just work in the JSU community. He lives in the community in the Hemingway Circle area. And, he worships in the community, at Pearl Street A.M.E. Church. His legacy will always be a part of our community. And for that, the College of Liberal Arts is eternally grateful."

James received an undergraduate degree in music education from JSU where he was the first tuba major and graduated cum laude. He received his master's degree from the University of Wisconsin and his doctorate from the University of Southern Mississippi. At USM he was the first African-American graduate in that program.

The donation from the Jimmie and Carrie James Endowment will be matched dollar-for-dollar through the university's Title III matching fund. ■

University Highlights



Fall sees record enrollment

Jackson State University's student enrollment grew 4.1 percent over last fall, continuing the university's three-year growth trend, which totals 6.6 percent. The enrollment of 9,508 students is its highest ever.

"This is significant for us. Our enrollment management team did a great job of sharing our story. We are thankful for that, and we are thankful that parents and students are continuing to embrace the reality that Jackson State University is a great investment," said President Carolyn W. Meyers.

The freshman class, the largest in the university's history, has 1,202 students.



Toyota Green Initiative gives car to JSU Athletics

The JSU Athletics Department has a spiffy new energy-saving car thanks to the Toyota Green Initiative.

Painted green (of course!), the Toyota Prius liftback was delivered to JSU as part of the fifth year of the Green Initiative. "We will use the car mainly as a transportation vehicle (for Sports Medicine staff to take student-athletes to doctor appointments, etc.)," said JSU Athletic Media Relations Manager Wesley Peterson.

It gets 600 miles to a tank, he said, and switches from gas to electric by itself. This newer model doesn't require being plugged into an outlet. "It's self-generating," he said, so it recharges itself.



Wireless initiative completed at Blackburn

Jackson State University donated 50 iPads to Blackburn Middle School and completed an initiative to make the school wireless.

Blackburn Principal Justin Green said JSU administration, faculty and staff invested "time and support to make Blackburn Middle School a success. Our school could be one of the top middle schools in the nation."

Jackson Public Schools Superintendent Cedrick Gray called JSU a "trailblazer" in the city for its efforts to bolster the school, which became a JSU laboratory school in 2013.



Call Me Mister gets \$1.3 million in funding

Clemson University's Call Me MISTER program received \$1.3 million from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Mich., to collaborate with Jackson State University to increase the number of African-American male teachers in Mississippi K-8 classrooms.

Jackson State University has about 10 students enrolled in the program. Funds will be used for tuition, books, professional development and a summer leadership institute.



Actor Danny Glover and hip-hop artist Common visit campus

Actor Danny Glover and Grammy-winning hip-hop artist Common drew a large crowd of students and fans to JSU's Rose E. McCoy Auditorium. The concert was part of the multi-city Nissan Truth Tour.



Chemistry major earns neuroscience award

Anissa Butler, a junior chemistry major, was recognized for her neuroscience research presentation at the annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students held in Nashville. It is the largest professional conference of its kind. More than 3,400 people attended.

A total of 1,600 students participated in presentations in 12 sub-disciplines of the biomedical and behavioral sciences.

Butler, among 22 students awarded \$250 for presentations in the division of neuroscience, plans to pursue an M.D./Ph.D. dual degree.



JSU named top military-friendly school

Jackson State University was designated a Top Military-Friendly University in Military Advanced Education's 2014 *Guide to Military-Friendly Colleges & Universities*.

Tim Abrams is director of the JSU Veterans and Military Center that provides services to improve and enhance the success of veterans, service members and dependents.



Student selected for Harvard conference

George Tan, a senior majoring in biology and chemistry, was selected to participate in a health panel at the 2014 Harvard Project for the Asian and International Relations Conference at Harvard University.

Tan, a native of Malaysia, is a member of Jackson State University's International Student Association, *The Blue and White Flash*, and serves as director of Multicultural Student Involvement in the Student Government Association. He was recognized as JSU's "Best International Student" of 2013.



State approves JSU to train K-12 administrators

The College of Education and Human Development received state approval for an initiative to make professional development training more accessible to K-12 administrators.

Jackson State University is the only university in the state offering such a program, said Dr. Ingrid Smith, associate dean and interim chair of Educational Leadership, who proposed the Online School Leadership Training Initiative.

The program provides online courses that school principals and central office administrators can access in their buildings or in their homes.

Dean Daniel Watkins said the program also serves as a recruitment tool for the college's doctoral Educational Leadership program.



Collaboration with university in China expanding

Jackson State University met with a delegation from Yangzhou University (YZU) in China to “deepen and widen” the JSU-YZU collaboration.

Three areas for future collaborations were outlined: student training and exchange, faculty exchange and research.

During the previous three summers, the College of Liberal Arts and the College of Education and Human Development jointly hosted two groups of scholars from Yangzhou for professional training and internships. Students from Yangzhou are also considering JSU for furthering their studies.

Engineering, science and technology programs receive accreditation

The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accredited the computer engineering, civil and environmental engineering and computer science programs. The Association of Technology Management and Applied Engineering accredited the technology program.

Dr. Richard Aló, dean of the College of Science, Engineering and Technology, said the programs are relatively new. “This is a real hallmark to be able to get out and say that within a 10-year period we pulled off accreditation and a new stellar building that’s recognized for using green technology.”

Dr. James C. Renick, provost and senior vice president for Academic and Student Affairs, said the accreditation assures students they’re getting a quality education.

ABET accredits more than 3,100 applied science, computing, engineering and engineering technology programs at more than 670 colleges and universities in 24 countries worldwide.



JSU wins 2013 SWAC Soccer Championship

Jackson State University claimed the 2013 Southwest Athletic Conference Soccer Tournament Championship with a 1-0 win over Alabama State at Houston Amateur Sports Park. Taylor Emerson finished with three saves, posting her third consecutive shutout for the tournament. She was named Most Valuable Player, finishing the three-game span with 12 saves. Sie’Yara Wells scored the game-winning goal during the 56th minute to hand JSU its second championship in program history. The last time JSU won the SWAC title was in 2010. Wells and Emerson joined teammates Kimberlie Hernandez, Alexandra Gautier, and Jalana Ellis on the all-tournament team.

Faculty/Staff Notes

Director of International Programs appointed

Dr. Lokesh Shivakumaraiah is the new director of International Programs. He



oversees various activities, including faculty-led programs, international student scholars and the International Visitor Center.

Shivakumaraiah holds a master's degree in electrical engineering and a doctorate in computer engineering from Mississippi State University. He worked in the industry designing electronic chips before pursuing his other passion — working with student affairs and international students. Shivakumaraiah was named MSU's Division of Student Affairs Outstanding Professional of the Year in 2010 and received the Mississippi World Trade Center Excellence in International Education Award in 2011.

Retired professor's donation leads to \$100K endowed scholarship

Dr. Richard Sullivan, retired chairman of the Chemistry Department, presented a \$50,000 check to establish the Richard



and Hursie Davis Sullivan Endowed Scholarship Fund, which will support students in the Chemistry and Biochemistry departments. The endowment will increase to \$100,000 through Jackson State University's Title III Matching Gift program.

Sullivan joined JSU in 1974. Shortly thereafter, he was promoted to chair of the Chemistry Department. During his tenure, he helped secure the first grant from the National Science Foundation for the Louis Stokes Mississippi Alliance for Minority Participation program that aims to increase graduation rates and numbers of students from all science and math areas.

Burks-Berry named interim director of Mississippi Learning Institute

Amy Burks-Berry was named interim director of the Mississippi Learning Institute, which works with local schools and the America Reads Mississippi-



Ameri-Corps Program to improve outcomes in teaching and student learning.

MLI was established in 2001. Since then, MLI has been successful in improving the performance of public school children from underserved populations on standardized tests by creating innovative pedagogies and instructional methods.

Burks-Berry has bachelor and master degrees in reading education from JSU and a certificate in Leadership Development from Mississippi State University.

Burton elected president of JPS Board of Trustees

Dr. Otha Burton Jr., executive director of the Institute of Government at Jackson State University, was elected president of the Jackson Public Schools Board of Trustees through the end of the 2013-2014 school year.



Burton was first elected to the board in 2010. In 2013, he was named executive director of the Institute of Government. Prior to that, he served as chair of

the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and as associate professor and associate dean of the School of Policy and Planning.

From 1998 to 2005, Burton worked as the chief administrative officer for the city of Jackson.

IHL lauds Dr. Robert Smith for community work

The Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning



named Dr. Robert Smith its 2014 Community Leader.

For the past 16 years, the IHL Board has honored an individual from the state who has made a difference in his or her community by working to enhance the quality of life for not only African-Americans, but for all citizens of the state.

Smith serves as chairman of the advisory board for the Margaret Walker Center and as an associate physician at JSU. The parkway that connects JSU to downtown Jackson was renamed for Smith in 2011 to pay tribute to his work as a medical pioneer and his courage as a civil rights activist.

Professor one of 30 recipients of worldwide award from India

Dr. Paresh Ray was named one of 30 recipients worldwide of the Mahat-



ma Gandhi Pravasi Samman 2014 Award. The award recognizes outstanding service, contribution and achievement by Indian-born professionals who live and work

outside of India.

Ray and his team of researchers in Jackson State University's Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology are developing a method to kill cancer cells without harming healthy cells. Their research paves the way to establish cancer treatments without the harsh side effects of chemotherapy and radiation. It could also lead to less expensive treatment for patients. Ray's photothermal therapy system has been effective in the lab, killing

prostate, breast, skin and liver cancer cells. A patent for the photothermal therapy system is pending.

Legislature recognizes chemistry professor and student

Dr. Ashton Hamme III, a chemistry professor, and Brandon Newton, a



senior chemistry student, were honored by the Mississippi Legislature during the 27th annual Higher Education Appreciation Day Working for Academic Excellence program.



Prior to joining Jackson State University, Hamme worked for Monsanto/Pharmacia Corp., where he performed medicinal chemistry-related research in the area of cardiovascular drug discovery and was a co-inventor of more than 10 patents. The Detroit native earned his bachelor's degree in chemistry from JSU and a Ph.D. in chemistry from The Ohio State University.

Newton is a JSU Presidential Scholar and earned the title of Best Chemistry Undergraduate Student 2011, 2012 and 2013. He is president of the American Chemical Society and a member of the Pre-Health Society.

Thomas named to board of Miss. Minority Business Alliance

Michael Thomas, vice president for Business and Finance, was named to the



Board of Directors of the Mississippi Minority Business Alliance Inc.

Thomas, a Jackson State University alumnus, joined JSU's administration in 2010 after 16 years with the Jackson Public School District, where he initiated a program to increase minority business participation called Jackson

First. Since joining JSU, Thomas' efforts have helped increase the university's minority business participation from 2 percent to nearly 17 percent.

The Mississippi Minority Business Alliance Inc. creates and expands mutually beneficial relationships between minority-owned businesses, suppliers and service organizations throughout the state. Alliance members include minority-owned businesses, corporate, governmental and educational institutions, and small- and minority-business resource agencies.

Academic adviser tops Miss. field, recognized at conference

F. Janelle Hannah Jefferson was recognized as the "Best of State" recipient for Mississippi at the Region 4 National Academic Advising Association Conference in Savannah, Ga.



Jefferson served as the lead presenter of "The iTeam: Advisement, Assessment, Transition, and Retention" at a Mississippi Adviser's Meeting. She is a professional academic adviser and instructor of University Success in Undergraduate Studies.

Associate professors selected for leadership program

Dr. Jacqueline Stevens and Dr. Carolyn Howard were accepted to The



Chicago School of Professional Psychology's Post Graduate Certificate in Academic Leadership online-blended program, which is part of the Opportunities for Under-Represented Scholars Program.

With funding from the National Science Foundation, the OURS Program addresses a national need to attract more

women to the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics workforce and the related need to provide female role models in STEM disciplines.

Stevens and Howard are associate professors of biology and part of the JSU Advance program, a leadership development program for women faculty funded by the National Science Foundation.

Stevens and Howard were also selected as OURS Program Fellows. The fellowship will provide tuition, fees and travel support for the residencies in Washington, D.C., and a \$3,000 stipend.

Assistant professor awarded grant to study adult learners

Dr. Jie Ke was selected as the recipient of the 2014 Association for Continuing Higher Education South Wayne

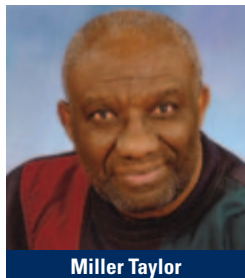


Whelan Research Grant. The topic of her research is "African American Adult Undergraduates in Focus: Motivations, Expectations and Aspirations."

Ke credited the JSU Academy for Research and Scholarly Engagement with helping her develop her winning proposal. She is an assistant professor of Human Resource Development and managing editor of *The Journal of Chinese Human Resource Management*. She sits on the board of directors for the Center for the Healing of Racism.

Class Notes

'60s



Miller Taylor

Miller Taylor ('66) has self-published a novel titled *A Lady and Her Man*. The story of two childhood sweethearts is available on Amazon.com. A Kindle version also is available.

Taylor has been a member of the Greater Washington, D.C., chapter of the JSU Alumni

Association for 30 years. He holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry and was president of the student body in his senior year at Jackson State University.

'70s



Thelma J. Strong

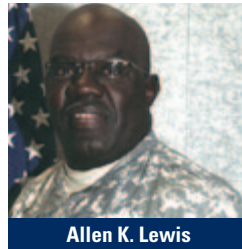
Thelma J. Strong ('79) is the chief financial officer for the U.S. Forest Service. She is responsible for the agency's annual financial statement, internal controls, grants and funds management, reimbursable agreements, Office of Inspector General (OIG) and General Accounting Office

(GAO) audits, financial policy, and financial reporting and reconciliation.

Under Strong's guidance, the Forest Service received its 12th consecutive unqualified financial opinion.

Strong, who holds a bachelor's degree in business, began her federal career in 1978 as a cooperative education student with the Forest Service. Over the last 35 years, she has worked in a number of jobs in different geographic areas across the U.S. She is vice president of the Greater Washington, D.C., Alumni Chapter and former vice president for the Northeast Region.

'80s



Allen K. Lewis

Allen K. Lewis ('80) has retired as a colonel in the U.S. Army and now resides in Atlanta.

A native of Canton, Miss., Lewis was in the Army ROTC at Jackson State University and belonged to the Sigma Chi

fraternity. He was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant after receiving a degree in mass communications.



Sylvester Taylor

Sylvester Taylor ('84), a banker and project manager for many years, recently began his own business, Prep Productions and Promotions, in Atlanta. He offers consulting, brand marketing and events planning services. Taylor holds a business degree in finance.



Dr. Cynthia G. Heard

Dr. Cynthia G. Heard ('87) of Memphis has been working as an associate professor of optometry at Southern College of Optometry since 2007.

Heard was a clinical educator at The Ohio State University College of Optometry from 1993-2007. She is a member of several optometric organizations

and is past president of the National Optometric Association (NOA). She was the 1998 NOA Optometrist of the Year.

She received a bachelor's degree in biology in 1987 from Jackson State University and her Doctor of Optometry in Geriatric Vision and Visual Rehabilitation at Birmingham VA Medical Center, which is affiliated with the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry.



Dr. John L. Cornelius II

Dr. John L. Cornelius II ('88) recently made his New York debut in the production of Bob Marley's, "Three Little Birds," a children's musical based on a picture book by musician Marley's daughter.

Cornelius served as arranger and orchestrator as well as

composer of additional music for the production.

After graduating from Jackson State University, Cornelius earned his Ph.D., studying at Washington University in St. Louis and River University under Mississippi native Samuel Jones. He is an associate professor of music at Prairie View (Texas) A&M University.

'90s



Dr. Mary Sue Durr

Dr. Mary Sue Brown Atkins Durr ('91), a former corporate trainer for Time Warner, has published her first book, *A Cry in the Night: The City of Lights' Dark Side*.

The book details her family's struggles during the civil rights movement and the murder of her

sister, Barbara Jean. Her book is available in stores and on amazon.com and other online bookstores.

Durr was born and raised in Mississippi and holds a degree in business management from Jackson State University. She also attended Mississippi College and Walden University and holds degrees in business administration and instructional design and technology with a Specialist degree in Training Development and Performance Improvement, and a Ph.D. in educational technology.



Tammi A. Davis

Tammi A. Davis ('93) was elected to serve a two-year term as the state president of the Indiana Democrat African-American Caucus of the Indiana Democratic Party. The caucus works to increase the political participation of African-Americans across Indiana.

Davis was a national delegate to the 2012 Democratic National Convention and serves as the 1st Congressional District coordinator for the Indiana Federation of Democratic Women. She holds a bachelor's degree in English.



Kenneth Havior

Kenneth Havior ('94) was awarded the Modern Day Technology Leader Award at the 28th annual Black Engineer of the Year STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Global Competiveness Conference held in Washington, D.C.

Havior has 17 years of systems engineering experience at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. and serves as the lead systems designer for the Embedded Training and Air-to-Air Range Infrastructure training functions and the Joint Direct Attack Munition and Small Diameter Bomb I weapon employment capabilities.

He is the F-22 liaison for the Coordinate Seeking Weapons, working closely with the F-22 System Program Office, JDAM Joint Program Office and the SDB I System Program Office. He also is a cost account manager on F-16 fighter programs, responsible for managing the budget for multiple control accounts.

Havior holds a dual bachelor's degree in mathematics and electrical engineering. He also is a 1996 graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology.



Dr. Ruben Howard II

Dr. Ruben Howard II ('95) has been appointed dean of the College to Careers, Transportation, Distribution and Logistics (TDC) at Olive-Harvey College/City Colleges of Chicago. He oversees a \$44.8 million TDL facility that will open in 2015. It is designed to prepare students for certifications

and associate degrees in all transportation modalities.

Howard previously worked as chairman of the business department and professor of logistics management at Lone Star College in Cypress, Texas.

Howard received a bachelor's degree in airway science from Jackson State University and a master's in transportation management from Texas Southern University. He also holds a Master in Business Administration from Texas A&M University and a Ph.D. in organization and management/business from Capella University.



Dr. Jacqueline Orr

Dr. Jacqueline Faulkner Orr ('97) was recently named vice chancellor for Students Affairs at Arkansas State University-Newport. Before joining Arkansas State, she was assistant vice president of Retention Management at Kentucky State University in Frankfort.

Orr, who grew up in Senatobia, Miss., majored in English and minored in education. While at Jackson State University, she was elected student body president, becoming the first female to hold that role.

Orr earned a master's degree in leadership and a Doctor of Education degree, with a concentration in higher and adult education, at the University of Memphis.



Dewon Hall

Dewon Hall ('99) has been honored by the website Revision Path, which is dedicated to featuring the best African-American graphic/web designers in the creative field.

In "The Best Interviews of 2013," Hall finished 10th out of nearly 40 interviews. Hall also

won Graphic Designer of the Year in 2007 and 2012 during the annual ADDY Awards produced by the American Advertising Federation/Mississippi Delta.

Hall holds a bachelor's in marketing from Jackson State University and a bachelor's in graphic design from Delta State University.

'00s



Dr. Danielle Hassel

Dr. Danielle Hinton Hassel, M.D., ('00) was named a Top 40 Health Care Professionals Under 40 honoree by the National Medical Association.

Hassel, who specializes in physical medicine and rehabilitation, serves as medical director of the Baptist Skilled

Rehabilitation Unit in Germantown, Tenn. She is on the Memphis Medical Society Board of Directors and the Tennessee Medical Association Board of Trustees. She also serves on executive committees for the Bluff City Medical Society and the Tennessee Association of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Hassel was inducted into Jackson State University's Delta

Pi chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and serves as co-chair of her local chapter's Health and Wellness Committee. She received her bachelor's degree in chemistry from JSU and was president of her class.



Michelle Bayne-Johnson

Michelle Bayne-Johnson ('03, '10), a third-grade teacher and lead teacher at Johnson Elementary School in the Jackson Public School District, was chosen 2014 Teacher of the Year.

She holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education. She also graduated from the School of

Education as a Specialist in Education/Guidance and School Counseling and is a certified tutor with Sylvan Learning Center.



Dr. Ernest L. Brothers

Dr. Ernest L. Brothers ('06)

was elected to a three-year term on the executive committee of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools at the organization's annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas. He is assistant dean of the graduate school, director of the Office of Graduate Training and

Mentorship and adjunct assistant professor in political science at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

CSGS is composed of public and private institutions granting master and doctoral degrees. The organization promotes the exchange of ideas and best practices in graduate education and research.

Brothers, who also serves as associate director for diversity enhancement for the National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis at UT, holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a master's degree in natural science from Delta State University, a Master of Public Policy and Administration degree from Mississippi State University, and a Doctor in Urban Higher Education degree from Jackson State University.



Jeffrey M. Graves

Jeffrey M. Graves ('06) works at the law firm of Copeland, Cook, Taylor and Bush in Ridgeland, Miss. His practice areas are insurance and general litigation. Graves graduated magna cum laude in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in music and received a juris doctorate in 2012 from the

University of Mississippi School of Law.



Harvey J. Stribling Jr.

Harvey J. Stribling Jr. (07) recently received a Specialist in Educational Leadership from Barry University in Miami Shores, Fla. He is currently working as an instructional literacy coach in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools System.

Stribling holds a bachelor's degree in social science education from Jackson State University and a master's degree in reading education from Barry University. He is an aspiring school administrator and an independent educational consultant. He plans to pursue a doctorate in education administration and public policy from Howard University in Washington, D.C.

'10s



Kevin Itima

Kevin Itima (10) has self-published his memoir *E Ware Mumene (I'm Going Home)*. It is the account of his journey as a young, first-generation Nigerian-American desperately searching for acceptance.

Born in Houston, Itima spent part of his high school years in Lagos, Nigeria. Upon his return to Houston, he attended Westbury High School and received a track scholarship to Jackson State University, where he majored in psychology and graduated with honors.

He previously served as a firefighter and substitute teacher in Baltimore. He now resides in Houston where he is completing work toward a master's degree in counseling.



Shannon Watkins

Shannon Sheree Watkins (10) is director of constituent services for New York State Sen. Diane J. Savino, who represents the 23rd District of New York City.

Watkins is responsible for assisting the senator in responding to citizen inquiries and complaints as well as investigating records, laws, policies and procedures. She also performs routine tasks for the senator and represents the senator with employees, businesses, civic organizations and the public.

In 2013, Watkins became a member of Lambda Kappa Mu sorority and serves as a youth leader with the sorority's national youth group, the Kopelles. She also is a member

of the National Council of Negro Women North Shore Chapter, where in 2013 she assumed the role in a girls mentoring program. Watkins holds a bachelor's degree in mass communications.



Jasmine Wilson

Jasmine Wilson (10) joined the staff of the Washington, D.C., Office on Aging as one of two transition care specialists for the Hospital Discharge Planning Team and the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Wilson oversees the discharge of patients from 16 Washington hospitals, including the District of Columbia VA Medical Center.

Wilson, who has presented research regarding elderly populations at the University of Puerto Rico, was previously employed as a clinical research assistant at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Social Work.

Originally from Grenada, Miss., Wilson holds a bachelor's degree in social work from Jackson State University and a master's of social work with a gerontology certification from the University of Pittsburgh. She was a member of the Gamma Rho chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority at JSU.



Duvalier Malone

Duvalier Malone (11) has been promoted to program analyst in the Department of Veteran's Affairs Office of Field Operations in Washington, D.C.

Malone was hired in 2009 as a Veterans Service representative at the Jackson, Miss., Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office where he served on the Post Determination Team. In 2011, Malone was promoted to Rating Veterans Service representative.

Malone is scheduled to release his book, *From the State Capitol to the Nation's Capitol: An Awakening Moment*, this fall.

Malone graduated from Alcorn State University in 2008 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He earned a master's in political science with a minor in public policy and administration from Jackson State University. He was an active member of the Association of Political Science and the Association of Public Administrators while at JSU.



Daphene Marie Brooks

Daphene Marie Brooks ('13) has joined the staff of U.S. Rep. Bennie G. Thomson (Miss.) as assistant/legislative correspondent for his Washington, D. C., office. She assists the congressman with various administrative and constituent outreach duties.

A native of Terry, Miss., Brooks holds a bachelor's degree in business management.



Daphene Marie Brooks

Kristy Johnson ('13) was crowned Miss Black Mississippi U.S. Ambassador. The Miss Black U.S. Ambassador and Miss Black Teen U.S. Ambassador Scholarship Pageant LLC, in partnership with the GE Institute Foundation Inc., provides young African-

American women with an opportunity to make a difference by providing educational forums and events that focus on health disparities, poverty, violence and other major issues in the African-American community.

Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in psychology.

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