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## Best of 2012 – #1: School of Education Receives \$5.7 Million from Hearin Foundation

Funds will help enhance programs, tackle early childhood education

DECEMBER 31, 2012 BY [ANDREW MARK ABERNATHY](#)

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Preschool teacher Simsie Shaw reads to 3- and 4-year-old students at Willie Price Lab School at UM. Willie Price has partnered with the Center For Excellence in Literacy Instruction and the facility play a key role in developing a new curriculum in early childhood education. Photo by Nathan Latil/University Communications.

OXFORD, Miss. – Five grants totaling more than \$5.7 million will help the University of Mississippi School of Education boost the state's public education system by enhancing its existing programs and establishing a new curriculum in early childhood education.

Among the monies from the Robert M. Hearin Support Foundation in Jackson is a grant for approximately \$1.1 million to hire three new faculty members specializing in pre-kindergarten education. These new faculty will be charged with helping shape a new master's degree and an undergraduate emphasis in pre-K education to qualify graduates for an endorsement in early childhood education from the Mississippi Department of Education.

"Right now, we strive to become a national leader in educator preparation," said David Rock, UM education dean and author of the early childhood proposal. "It's our goal to increase the number of educators with the expertise to improve education issues across the board: in leadership, in STEM education, in literacy education, in high-needs schools and in early childhood education. We're proud that we can grow on our current successes and innovate new ways to improve student learning."

The School of Education is the state's largest institution for teacher and educational leadership preparation.

In addition to the school's plans for two new early childhood education curricula, existing programs and centers will receive funding, including:

- Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction, \$1.5 million
- Center for Mathematics and Science Education, \$1.2 million
- Mississippi Teacher Corps, \$525,000
- Principal Corps, \$1.5 million

### Center for Excellence in Literacy Instruction

With plans to help the Mississippi Department of Education develop its state literacy plan, CELI will increase its staff in 2013 with two new literacy specialists. The goal is to expand its outreach programs with north Mississippi partner schools and to help design a rural teacher residency model similar to the Mississippi Teacher Corps, which could help non-education college graduates transition into teaching careers in the state's public elementary schools.

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OXFORD, Miss. – Eleven University of Mississippi students spent their winter break learning about the people who work behind the scenes of the American government in Washington, D.C. Lead by Jonathan Klingler, assistant professor of political science, the students of Pol 391: Applied Politics met not with candidates, but with the people who make candidates'

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OXFORD, Miss. – Stephanie Jennings Teague, of Chicago, sees her commitment of \$100,000 to the Patterson School of Accountancy's new building at the University of Mississippi as a means of saying "thank you." "It is a way to show a small token of my appreciation to Ole Miss, the faculty and staff, and the accounting

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### Reuters: Keep an Eye on the Money Supply

U.S. inflation roller coaster prompts fresh look at long-ignored money supply By Michael S. Derby NEW YORK – The amount of money sloshing around the U.S. economy shrank last year for the first time on record, a development that some economists believe bolsters the case for U.S. inflation pressures continuing to abate. The Federal Reserve's

Last summer, the center partnered with the university's Willie Price Lab School, which will also serve as a facility for the School of Education to develop new early childhood education programs.

"We're hoping that Willie Price will become a model pre-K program for Mississippi," said Angela Rutherford, who serves as director of both CELI and Willie Price. "What we're learning and doing here can be implemented in pre-K classrooms around the state. Willie Price is not going to just continue to be a place where UM faculty, staff and students can send their children. We're looking to grow our programs and accommodate more families to more fully meet the needs of preschool children."

### **Center for Mathematics and Science Education**

Founded with a similar Hearin grant in 2006, the CMSE will continue its outreach mission to offer continuing education to STEM teachers in school districts across Mississippi and provide graduate fellowships for master's and doctoral students in mathematics and science education.

To date, 100 percent of CMSE graduate fellows have received faculty or administrative jobs upon graduation.

"We've been able to create an infrastructure to engage Mississippi STEM education on multiple levels," said John O'Haver, director of the center. "This gives us the momentum to keep moving forward."

Additionally, the new funding will help grow the center's summer camps in mathematics, engineering and robotics for Mississippi high school students. Last year, nearly 200 young Mississippians participated in a CMSE summer camp.

"Right now, if you count out pre-med, Ole Miss is only producing around 300 STEM graduates each year," O'Haver said. "If we can even get a portion of these students interested in coming to Ole Miss and majoring in a STEM field, that number can increase drastically over time."

### **Mississippi Teacher Corps**

The Mississippi Teacher Corps, the most competitive alternative-route teaching program in the country, accepting fewer than 10 percent of applications each year, will enhance its recruiting efforts to place 45 more mathematics and science teachers in Mississippi classrooms over the next four years. The Teacher Corps also plans to offer a \$2,000 signing bonus for the program's math and science graduates who continue teaching in Mississippi public schools after graduation.

"Our goal is to provide the incentive for quality math and science teachers to stay in Mississippi," said Ryan Niemeyer, co-director of the Teacher Corps. "Between earning a master's degree from the program, an AA teaching license and this bonus, we're hoping the investment in STEM teachers will help our retention numbers rise."

The 23-year-old program is primarily funded by the state Legislature to address teacher shortages in critical-needs Mississippi schools, and the new funding will allow for 10 to 15 new STEM recruits a year for the next four years. Last year, the Teacher Corps received more than 400 applications from college graduates around the country to fill 25 slots in the program. Admission includes guaranteed job placement, teacher training and full scholarships for a master's degree in education.

According to Teacher Corps data, five years after graduation, more than 50 percent of recruits are still teaching and 75 percent are still involved in education.

### **Principal Corps**

Under new leadership from former state superintendent of education Tom Burnham, the Principal Corps will widen its recruitment efforts with the goal of doubling enrollment.

"When you look at a map of our past recruits, we've only had two from south of Jackson," Burnham said. "We're hoping to receive more applicants from the Gulf Coast this year."

The current cohort includes nine aspiring educational leaders from Mississippi public school districts. With the new funding, the Principal Corps will be able to accept up to 20 outstanding leadership candidates.

An innovative, 13-month blend of graduate study and on-the-job training, the Principal Corps was founded in 2009 with a \$2 million grant from the Jim and Donna Barksdale Foundation. To date, 100 percent of the program's alumni have received job offers as K-12 principals or assistant principals upon graduation. By next August, the number of Principal Corps alumni working in Mississippi public schools is expected to grow to 39.

Principal Corps recruits attend seminars on the Ole Miss campus one weekend per month and during two summer semesters to earn either a master's or specialist degree in educational leadership. During the fall and spring semesters, students complete two full-time internships with proven mentor principals and occasionally act as de facto assistant principals at their internship sites. Many receive job offers from one of their internship sites.

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Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and Economy, said the training of school principals has been left to departments of school administration in universities "who admitted anyone who applied and whose criteria for a good program was that it took in more in revenue than it cost to run the program."

"This program has been built to a very different standard. It rejects nine of every ten applicants. It was designed with great care with the help of experts from Harvard, Stanford and Vanderbilt universities," Tucker said. "It draws on the resources of the much-admired National Institute for School Leadership using the same kind of apprenticeship approach that has been producing master craftsmen since the middle ages. Under the leadership of Tom Burnham, former Mississippi State Superintendent of Instruction and Dean of the University of Mississippi School of Education, this best-kept-secret of Mississippi education deserves a lot more national attention than it has received to date."

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