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Academic Qualifications Surge as UM Enrollment Tops 21,500 Students

SEPTEMBER 17, 2012 BY MITCHELL DIGGS



OXFORD, Miss. – After watching enrollment grow by more than 6 percent each of the past two years, University of Mississippi officials took steps to control out-of-state admissions this fall. Even with the tougher standards, Ole Miss enrollment hit a new all-time record this fall. Preliminary enrollment figures show a total unduplicated headcount on all the university’s campuses of 21,535. That’s up 691 students from last fall, a 3.3 percent increase. “The dramatic increase in applications over the last few years led to a decision to manage our growth through a new admissions process for nonresident students,” Chancellor Dan Jones said. “A first step was the decision to limit the size of the freshman class to assure a good academic and campus life experience for our students. “We are thrilled that the new enrollment strategy also allows us to continue our progress on stronger academic credentials of our admitted students.” The average ACT score of this year’s freshman class jumped from 23.5 last fall to an all-time record of 23.8 this year. Their high school GPA increased too, from 3.35 to 3.43, meaning Ole Miss freshmen are better prepared for the rigor of college courses, Provost Morris Stocks said. This reflects the university’s growing reputation for offering quality academic programs in a vibrant community, Stocks said. Just within the past month, the university moved up to No. 18 on Forbes’ annual list of “Best Value Colleges” and Oxford was ranked as the nation’s second-best college town by [Livability.com](#).

“As national interest in our university has increased, we have been able to manage growth while the qualifications of our new students have improved,” he said. “Our ability to offer outstanding academic opportunities in a safe and nurturing environment on a beautiful campus makes us unique. “We are grateful that several national publications, including Forbes and Newsweek, have heaped praise on our programs, campus and students. At the same time, the Chronicle of Higher Education has ranked our university as one of the Best Colleges To Work For. These strong accomplishments are a testament to the quality of the faculty, staff and leadership of our university.” The student body includes 3,373 new freshmen, down 196 students from last fall but still the second-largest freshman class in Mississippi history. About two-thirds of Ole Miss students are from Mississippi, but the university attracts students from across the nation and world. Overall, the student body includes representatives from every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 74 foreign countries. As the university prepares to celebrate 50 years of integration, minority enrollment also is setting records, with 5,344 students, or 24.8 percent, identifying themselves as minorities. African-American enrollment also hit a record high of 3,546 students, or 16.5 percent of the overall student body. Several academic programs enjoyed strong growth over last fall. The schools of Accountancy and Business Administration grew by more than 5 percent, and the schools of Applied Sciences, Engineering, Journalism and Pharmacy each saw their enrollment climb by 10 percent or more. Joella Vaughn, a chemical engineering freshman from Washington, D.C., chose to attend UM because of family ties, but she said the engineering school’s academics and close-knit atmosphere are strong selling points. “I didn’t know how hard the quizzes were going to be,” she said. “I even found myself studying Saturday night. But I can already tell that my hard work and effort will pay off in the end. Ole Miss is a wonderful place to study, and I won’t regret my decision.” At the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College, enrollment has topped 1,000 students for the first time, growing from 920 in 2011 to 1,050 this year. Among them are a record 356 freshmen, who come from 28 states and one foreign country. “Ole Miss was the complete package,” said Mary Elizabeth Kakales, a freshman in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College from Memphis, Tenn. “As a member (of the Honors College), I know that I’ll be challenged in my classes and I’ll be forced to think in new ways about different topics. “Also, I love all of the diverse opinions that I’ve already encountered in the Honors College. It makes my classes really interesting and thought-provoking.” A record 2,734 students are enrolled at the UM Medical Center in Jackson. That’s an increase of 114 students (4.4 percent) over last fall, with the largest increase coming in the School of Nursing (25 percent), said Tom Fortner, the Medical Center’s chief public affairs and communications officer. Demand continues to grow on the Tupelo campus, where 905 students are enrolled this year (up 5.7 percent from 856 last year). Enrollment also remains strong at satellite campuses in Southaven, where 923 students are enrolled, Booneville (89 students) and Grenada (110 students). Last month, the university opened three new residence halls – Ridge North, Ridge South and Ridge West – providing housing for more than 850 students on the Oxford campus in “living learning communities,” where people with similar academic

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Campus Briefs

Civil Engineering Professor Receives Most-Cited Paper Award

OXFORD, Miss. – Peer recognition is a rewarding experience for anyone, but University of Mississippi researcher Amir Mehrara Molan was elated when an article he co-authored recently received the Most Cited Paper Award at the 102nd Transportation Research Board meeting in the nation’s capital. The International Journal of Transportation Science and Technology presented the civil engineering

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Young Alumna Gives Back to School of Accountancy

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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Ole Miss In the News

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

interests are grouped together. "It's been easier because we have our own study rooms and I've gotten to know a lot of the guys and girls who are in my program," said George Preston, a freshman from Nashville who is majoring in real estate and managerial finance. "They are all business majors, and we all have same classes and homework so we all help each other out. It also makes it a lot easier to get to know people." The Ole Miss student body, excluding the Medical Center, includes 16,058 undergraduates, 1,992 graduate students, 520 law students and 223 students in the Doctor of Pharmacy program. For more information on enrollment and programs at UM, go to <http://www.olemiss.edu>.

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