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Alumnus Lands Prestigious Teaching Fellowship

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Alumnus Lands Prestigious Teaching Fellowship

Austyn Jones recognized by Knowles Teacher Initiative for passion and leadership in classroom

NOVEMBER 8, 2022 BY EDWIN B. SMITH

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UM alumnus Austyn Jones says he wants to use his Knowles Teacher Initiative fellowship to 'shake up' his classroom at Biloxi High School. Jones, who teaches math, is among 29 Knowles Fellows selected for this year. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – From a young age, Austyn Jones knew he wanted to be a teacher. The **Knowles Teacher Initiative** has recognized that passion for the profession in naming Jones a 2022 Knowles Fellow.

The 2022 **University of Mississippi** secondary education graduate joins a national network of STEM teachers aimed at improving education for all students.

The Knowles Fellowship is a highly competitive and intensive five-year program that supports early career high school STEM teachers as they evolve as teachers and leaders in the classroom. Jones is among 29 high school math and science teachers to have been selected to the program.

"The Knowles Fellowship is possibly the one thing in life that I felt like I had checked all the boxes, but that it wouldn't be enough," said Jones, who teaches math at Biloxi High School.

"I was competing with a talented pool of people from all over the country, and the fact that I could be one of 29 was an exciting possibility. Plus, the fellowship is a very generous package for any potential educator."

Knowles Fellows have access to grants to help cover the cost of classroom materials, can engage in professional development and spearhead leadership activities that have an impact beyond their own classrooms. Fellows also have access to stipends, mentoring and coaching from experienced teachers and teacher educators, and membership in a nationwide community of more than 450 teachers who are committed to improving education.

Jones said his long-term goal is to "really shake up my classroom."

"I've been reading about two different classroom structures that put students at the center of learning: the thinking classroom and the flipped classroom," he said. "Knowles is a wonderful tool to help me achieve my long-term goals because we have a network of educators who are tackling similar ideas that I've just begun to notice."

Marcus Boudreaux, Biloxi Public Schools superintendent, said Jones' selection as a Knowles Fellow has multiple positive impacts

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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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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



Austyn Jones goes over concepts in his classroom at Biloxi High School. Submitted photo

“Recognition among his peers, setting a positive example for his students and representing Biloxi High School at a high level,” he said. “Most importantly, it will provide him the opportunity to increase his capacity as a master teacher and provide an even more impactful education to the students that he serves.”

Jones has already made an impact with his teaching, said Teresa Martin, principal at Biloxi High School.

“Mr. Jones is an excellent math teacher,” she said. “His high energy and outside-of-the-box thinking keeps the students fully engaged in learning.”

When asked what he likes about math, Jones said he loves how interconnected it is.

“It’s like a giant puzzle, and I like seeing how all the pieces fit together,” he said. “What kept me still wanting to be a teacher was the chance to be a positive mathematical influence in the lives of

potential students.”

Jones said he wanted to help fill a nationwide need for good math teachers and to open his students’ minds to career possibilities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.

“Growing up, I don’t remember knowing many people who were in STEM in my community, nor did I see myself as someone who could be in STEM,” he said. “I think investing in STEM education is how we can get youth, especially marginalized youth, to think of the STEM field as an extension of themselves.”

As an undergraduate, the Jackson native worked in the Mississippi Delta as a part of the Sunflower County Freedom Project. He did his student teaching in Oxford.

Staying in Mississippi is important, he said.

“This is my home state,” he said. “It’s where I was educated, and there’s no denying that we face a shortage of educators here. I felt the need to give back to the same state that provided me with the strong education I received.”

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