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Business Students Learn Private Label Manufacturing in the Windy City

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Business Students Learn Private Label Manufacturing in the Windy City

Retail association's gathering provided experiential learning for many U.S. students

DECEMBER 12, 2019 BY STELLA CONNELL



UM seniors (from left) Brenna Johnson and JaQaveious 'Jay' Collins, (back); UM School of Business Administration career planning specialist Amy Jo Carpenter and UM junior Skylar Read attend the 2019 PLMA University Outreach program in Chicago. Submitted photo

OXFORD, Miss. – Three **University of Mississippi** business students were among 62 undergraduates from 16 colleges and universities chosen to participate in the **Private Label Manufacturers Association's** third annual University Outreach program.

The meeting, held Nov. 15-19 at the Hyatt Regency in Chicago, was in conjunction with PLMA's annual trade show. The program provided students with an immersive experience in the grocery retailing and store-brand industry.

The Ole Miss students participating in the program were JaQaveious "Jay" Collins, a senior managerial finance major from Okolona; Skylar Read, a junior marketing and communications strategy major from Ocean Springs; and Brenna Johnson, a senior marketing major from Mobile, Alabama.

"Our Ole Miss business student team was one of the strongest at the program this year," said Amy Jo Carpenter, career planning specialist for the **School of Business Administration**. "Through the rigorous classes, and the time on the show floor with exhibitors and retail buyers, our students were provided countless networking opportunities.

"This event, and others like it, provide our students with hands-on experience and a glimpse into the workings of the private label industry."

The program included two days of university-level classes, followed by two days under the mentorship of practicing professionals in the buying and selling divisions of retail businesses.

Participating retailers included Walmart, Walgreens, Kroger, Trader Joe's, Sonoco and Castle Foods.

"PLMA gave me the opportunity to gather hands-on experience with the private labeling aspect of the marketing world," Read said. "I most enjoyed spending time with the retailers and buyers on the show floor.

"This experience was truly unique, and I am still thrilled that I was able to be a part of the 2019 University Outreach Program."

The classes included an overview of retailing and store-brand development in the U.S., the role of manufacturers and retailers, generational marketing, store brand innovation, the e-commerce revolution, and leadership and teamwork.

"The Private Label Manufacturers Association has grown rapidly, and the 2019 program hosted approximately 60 students from around the country," said Clay Dockery, a business school alumnus and vice chair of the organization. "Manufacturers exhibiting included food, beverage and nonfood products.

"The industry attendees included grocers, mass merchandisers, drug chains, club stores, convenience stores and others. The team from Ole Miss had a tremendous level of engagement and learned quite a bit about our industry."

Besides UM, participating schools were Auburn University, Baruch College, California Polytechnic State University, Grambling State University, Ithaca College, Portland State University, Texas A&M University,

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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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