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8-5-2022

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Recommended Citation

Smith, Patrick and Tarpy, Whitney, "Pharmacy Graduate Programs Aim to Increase Diverse Workforce" (2022). *University of Mississippi News*. 3979.

<https://egrove.olemiss.edu/umnews/3979>

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Pharmacy Graduate Programs Aim to Increase Diverse Workforce

UM outreach efforts look to expand knowledge about pharmaceutical sciences

AUGUST 5, 2022 BY PATRICK SMITH AND WHITNEY TARPY



UM pharmacy students work in a laboratory in the Department of BioMolecular Sciences. The School of Pharmacy is increasing efforts to attract and retain a diverse graduate student population and to encourage underrepresented minority students interested in research and graduate school programs. Photo by Kevin Bain/Ole Miss Digital Imaging Services

OXFORD, Miss. – To raise awareness about the field of pharmaceutical sciences and career pathways among potential students across the region, the Office of Research and Graduate Programs at the **University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy** is investing in increased outreach and recruitment efforts.

The school's efforts focus on diverse undergraduate student populations throughout the state and beyond.

Funds allocated by the dean's office allowed the ORGP and representatives from the school's academic units to visit colleges and conferences around the state, presenting on various career options a graduate degree in pharmaceutical sciences provides.

"Building a diverse graduate student population and fostering an inclusive environment is an important part of our school's equity-in-action plan," said Soumyajit Majumdar, associate dean for research and graduate programs. "Increased representation of students from various backgrounds supports a strong and innovative scholarly environment, guided by unique perspectives and creativity.

"This ultimately supports the creation of a diversified and globally competitive biomedical workforce in the field of pharmaceutical sciences and impacts public health outcomes."

These diversity outreach efforts also have been supported by the university. The UM **Graduate School** awarded a grant to the ORGP to build partnerships with Mississippi Minority-Serving Institutions.

Thanks to this funding, administrators and faculty members have successfully launched multiple efforts.

Majumdar spoke with students and faculty at Alcorn University and its chemistry department. Paul Boudreau, assistant professor of pharmacognosy, attended virtual fairs with Tougaloo College and Jackson State University, while others participated at Belhaven University's in-person fair.

Additionally, the pharmacy school's outreach team, supported by the ORGP, attended the Society of Advancing Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science Conference and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minoritized Scientists. The office plans to do so again for the 2022

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Campus Briefs

Students Learn 'Real Politics' in Washington, D.C., Winter Session

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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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 abate. The Federal Reserve's

SACNAS Conference in October.

Outreach and recruitment efforts also have increased on the Ole Miss campus. Graduate program faculty and administrators met with participants of the McNair's Scholars and Mississippi IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence Research Scholars programs.

The school also has initiated mentor training through the prestigious Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research to better equip graduate faculty to work with diverse students.

New programs are in the works, too. The university's **Division of Diversity and Community Engagement** has provided a \$25,000 grant to ORGP to support the creation of a Summer Research Experience for Underrepresented Minority Students program.

This new program will help encourage underrepresented minority students interested in research and graduate school programs.

Scheduled to begin in May 2023, the 10-week experience will allow students to participate in pharmaceutical sciences research and learn from faculty in the pharmacy school.

"Developing students and building inclusive excellence at the School of Pharmacy and within the greater STEM field are woven into our school's mission," said Donna Strum, Ole Miss pharmacy dean. "This summer research experience will give underrepresented minority students an opportunity to get a hands-on look at our school's extensive research capabilities."

The school offers master's and doctoral degrees in three of its academic departments: **BioMolecular Sciences, Pharmaceutics and Drug Delivery**, and **Pharmacy Administration**.

The ORGP, along with each academic unit, provides professional and personal development opportunities for its student populations. Events have included career planning, emotional intelligence, public speaking and networking.

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