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UM Enrollment Tops 23,000 Students for Fall Semester

State's flagship university sees improvement in freshman ACT scores, GPAs

SEPTEMBER 10, 2014 BY MITCHELL DIGGS

FaTvLiErCtSMPrSt



Students take advantage of beautiful weather by gathering for class outside Holman and Conner halls.

OXFORD, Miss. – Enrollment at the University of Mississippi surged this fall for the 20th consecutive year, making history with more than 23,000 students across all its campuses for the first time.

Preliminary enrollment figures show a total unduplicated headcount of 23,096, largest in the state. That's up 805 students from last fall, or 3.6 percent. The figures include the largest freshman class ever for any Mississippi university, a class that sports the highest ACT

scores and high school GPAs in Ole Miss history.

"We are very pleased that students and families across Mississippi and throughout America continue to recognize the quality education and outstanding college experience we offer at the University of Mississippi, all at a very competitive price," Chancellor Dan Jones said. "Our faculty and staff work very hard to deliver the very best academic programs for students, and it's truly rewarding to see those efforts being acknowledged with extraordinary interest in attending our university."

The incoming freshman class swelled to 3,814 this fall, up 6.5 percent from 3,582 last year. Student retention also remains near record levels, with preliminary reports showing 84.6 percent of last year's freshmen have returned to campus this fall, the second-highest retention rate in school history.

"While we're very happy with the endorsement of so many new freshmen this fall, we're particularly pleased with the success of the first-year programs we have in place to help freshmen adjust to the rigors of a world-class university," Jones said. "Many of our students are the first in their families to attend college, so we try to give them all the tools they need to be successful during their time on campus and then as they launch their careers."

Nearly two-thirds, 61.2 percent, of Ole Miss students are from Mississippi, including students from all the state's 82 counties. The university also attracts students from across the nation and world. Overall, the student body includes representatives from every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 92 foreign countries.

This year's freshmen are better prepared for college course work, with an average ACT score of 24.3, compared to an average of 24.1 last fall. Their high school GPA increased too, from 3.46 to 3.49. Both measures have increased every year since 2010.

This year's freshman class includes 57 class valedictorians, 52 salutatorians, 73 student body presidents, 83 Eagle Scouts and 10 Girl Scouts who achieved the Gold Award, the highest honor in Girl Scouting.

"Student leaders are an important component of our campus community," said Morris Stocks, UM provost. "The University of Mississippi has a long history of attracting top students with demonstrated leadership skills. We have the wonderful opportunity to provide a leadership training ground and to influence these young leaders for a short but important period of time. We are thrilled that this freshman class is filled with future leaders."

Minority enrollment totaled 5,488 students, or 23.8 percent. African-American enrollment is 3,285 students, or 14.2 percent of overall enrollment.

Ole Miss by the Numbers.

The student body also is diverse in age and national origin, ranging from four 15-year-old students to an 87-year-old pursuing a bachelor's degree in French. Two of the 15-year-olds are dually enrolled at Oxford High School and the university. One of the other students, from Vietnam, has not declared a major, and the other is an international

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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

studies major from Lee County. The youngest graduate student is an 18-year-old from China who is pursuing a Ph.D. in pharmaceutical sciences.

The university's **Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College** continues to expand, enrolling 1,210 students this fall, a more than 15 percent increase since fall 2012. The acclaimed Honors College has a record 373 incoming freshmen, with 54 percent being Mississippi residents. This fall's honors freshmen have an average ACT of 30.2 and an average high school GPA of 3.93. The college's facility on Sorority Row is undergoing a major expansion and renovation to accommodate its larger student body.

The university's undergraduate schools of Accountancy, Engineering, Nursing, and Journalism and New Media all enjoyed double-digit growth. The number of undergraduate students in accountancy hit a record of 962, up from 869 last fall, and enrollment in the School of Journalism and New Media topped 1,000 for the first time – 1,044 this fall, compared to 886 last year.



Students travel across campus between classes.

In the School of Nursing, based on UM's **Medical Center** campus in Jackson, enrollment is up by 18.4 percent this fall, from 685 to 811 students. That follows a 28 percent spike last year. The dramatic growth reflects the school's emphasis on lifelong learning, from the undergraduate level through its doctoral programs, said Marcia Rachel, the school's associate dean for academics.

"Faculty members in the School of Nursing have worked hard to make sure all programs are

current and relevant, and that the classroom and clinical experiences are distinctive, dynamic and engaging," Rachel said. "We have excellent pass rates on national licensure and certification exams, and our reputation in the community is solid.

"In short, we are committed to our mission – to develop nurse leaders and improve health through excellence in education, research, practice and service."

After seven consecutive years of growth, the UM **School of Engineering** ranks as one of the nation's fastest growing. The undergraduate enrollment, which topped 1,000 for the first time in 2012, is 1,419 this fall, up from 1,285 last year.

"The UM School of Engineering has always been somewhat of a hidden treasure with small classes and personable faculty," said Alex Cheng, the school's dean. "But lately, more and more students from across the country and around the world are discovering just what we have to offer: a first-rate engineering education with the added liberal arts element, preparing our students for leadership positions in their careers."

The numbers of students majoring in mechanical engineering, geology and geological engineering, and chemical engineering have more than doubled in the past five years. During that time, the school renovated many classrooms and laboratories, and moved its administrative offices into the renovated Brevard Hall. The university also added the **Center for Manufacturing Excellence** to complement and enhance existing engineering programs.

Another area experiencing rapid growth is the university's professional pharmacy program, which leads to a Pharm.D. degree and professional certification. The number of students pursuing their Pharm.D. after earning a bachelor's degree in pharmaceutical sciences grew from 232 in 2013 to 290 this fall.

"The growth in our professional program is directly related to the quality pharmacy education that we provide," pharmacy Dean David D. Allen said. "We're proud of our program's accessibility and affordability for both Mississippi students and out-of-state students. Not only do we have a tuition ranked in the country's lowest 20 percent, but our graduates also have top scores for the national pharmacy licensure exam. I think students are additionally encouraged by our high job placement rate. Nearly 100 percent of our graduates are employed by the time they receive their degrees."

To help accommodate the growing student population, the university has opened **Rebel Market**, a totally new dining facility in Johnson Commons, replacing the old cafeteria, as well as several satellite eateries across campus. Construction began this summer on a new residence hall in the Northgate area of campus, and Guess Hall is slated to be demolished soon to make way for two new five-story residence halls on that site.

Construction is continuing on a new facility for the **School of Medicine**, which will allow the university to increase class sizes, helping train more physicians to serve the state's health care needs. A major expansion is underway at Coulter Hall, home of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, and a new water tower is nearly complete near Kinard Hall. Work to renovate and modernize locker rooms and other fitness facilities at the Turner Center should wrap up by the end of the fall semester. Also, a three-year project will begin soon to expand and modernize the Student Union.

For more information on enrollment and programs at UM, go to <http://www.olemiss.edu>.

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