



WONDER WHEMN

FOR THIS GENERATION & THE NEXT



WHEMN CONFERENCE 2024

February 29-March 1

Oxford, Mississippi

Hosted by the University of Mississippi



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WHEMN MISSION

The mission of the Women in Higher Education – Mississippi Network (WHEMN) is to identify, develop, advance, and support women in higher education in Mississippi. The goals of the organization are to: (1) Promote and support women’s leadership in higher education, particularly in Mississippi. (2) Facilitate networking of women leaders in higher education with each other and with organizations and networks that have shared goals. (3) Develop collaborative partnerships with other institutions, organizations, associations, foundations, and businesses to help achieve the mission of WHEMN. (4) Enhance the visibility of women administrators on Mississippi campuses. (5) Assist in career development of professional women and women students in higher education, with particular emphasis on minority women. (6) Identify potential women leaders and provide mentoring. (7) Recognize achievement of women administrators through appropriate awards.

PRESIDENTS’ ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dr. Mary S. Graham

President, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Dr. Barbara C. McMillin

President, Blue Mountain College

Nora R. Miller

President, Mississippi University For Women

WHEMN CONFERENCE STEERING COMMITTEE

Charlotte Pegues, Chair and WHEMN State Coordinator

Emily Ferris, Co-Chair

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Jenn Fos

Merrill Magruder
Shawnboda Mead
Mitzi Norris
Charlotte Parks

Rebecca Phillips
Jennifer Saxon
Jennifer Simmons
Lisa Stone

GREETINGS

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI

Hotty Toddy! We're so glad you've joined us in Oxford for the 2024 WHEMN Conference. This annual event is an amazing professional development and networking opportunity, which has a decades-long proven track record of identifying, developing, advancing and supporting women across all areas of higher education.



As a founding member, it is inspiring to witness the ongoing and growing impact of WHEMN. It began with the inaugural conference in 2004 with 57 participants, and now here we are hosting the 21st annual event with more than 400 participants from more than 25 higher education institutions across Mississippi. I extend my deep gratitude to Patti Gordon and Northwest Community College for their tremendous work on the 2022 and 2023 conferences – they contributed to a long tradition of outstanding WHEMN events!

This year's theme, "Wonder WHEMN: For this generation and the next" embraces the notion that women serve as superheroes in the countless roles we fill in our professional and personal lives. It is also a nod to all the trailblazing women who champion others and empower the next generation of female leaders by sharing their stories, journeys, advice, mentorship and support. I'm thrilled for all the ways you will benefit and grow from the wisdom and experiences of our stellar speakers, panelists and other attendees!

I'm so grateful to have worked with a dedicated and talented team of women at the university on this event. They truly are Wonder WHEMN and have put together an event that I'm confident will provide long-lasting value for your professional development, encourage uplifting networking opportunities and feature timely topics to help advance your work in higher education.

We're so glad you joined us for the 2024 WHEMN Conference!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlotte Pegues".

Charlotte Pegues

2024-25 State Coordinator



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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2024

Olivia and Archie Manning Athletics Performance Center

7:30 a.m. Registration and Breakfast

8:30 a.m. Welcome

Dr. Charlotte Fant Pegues, vice chancellor for student affairs, The University of Mississippi

8:45 a.m. Morning Motivation

Elizabeth Heiskell, *The Today Show* food contributor and *Southern Living* contributing editor

9:30 a.m. Opening Keynote

“Inclusive Leadership: Fostering a Culture of Support and Collaboration,” Dr. Alexandria White, senior vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion, ReBoot Accel

10:15 a.m. Break

Networking Break, Door Prizes and Announcements

10:30 a.m. Panel Session

Nurturing the Next Generation Through Student Engagement and Success

11:30 a.m. Networking Luncheon

“For this Generation and the Next: Empowering the Body & Mind,”
Dr. Jeanna Wilkes, special projects coordinator, University of Mississippi Medical Center

12:45 p.m. Skill-Building Session

“Strike a Pose: Shaping the Wonder Woman in You,”
Andrea Jekabsons, chief human resources officer, The University of Mississippi

1:45 p.m. Panel Session

Science Superheroes: Cultivating Careers in Science & Research

2:45 p.m. Break

Networking Break, Door Prizes, Snacks and Announcements

3:15 p.m. Panel Session

Game Changers: Connections & Empowerment Through Coaching

4:15 p.m. Break

Door Prizes and Announcements

4:30 p.m. Mentoring Program Meetup

Location: The Sandy and John Black Pavilion, South All-American Club

5:00 p.m. Reception

Location: The Sandy and John Black Pavilion, The Pavilion Club

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 2024

Gertrude C. Ford Center for the Performing Arts

7:30 a.m. Registration and Breakfast

8:15 a.m. Welcome

Dr. Charlotte Fant Pegues, vice chancellor for student affairs, The University of Mississippi

8:30 a.m. Closing Keynote

“The Power of Your Voice and Your Seat,” Natasha Gregoire,
head of internal communications, Amazon Operations Businesses in the Americas

9:15 a.m. Panel Session

The Balancing Act: Sustaining Yourself and Your Profession

10:15 a.m. Break

Networking Break, Door Prizes and Announcements

10:30 a.m. Panel Session

View From the Top: Leadership Lessons & Journeys

11:30 a.m. Closing

Remarks by Chancellor Glenn F. Boyce and Awards Presentation

Noon Adjourn



WONDER WHEMN
FOR THIS GENERATION & THE NEXT

PANEL SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION THROUGH STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS

Thursday, Feb. 29 at 10:30 a.m., Manning Center

This session promises an insightful discussion on the importance of nurturing the next generation. Delve into a dialogue rich with best practices for effective student engagement, explore proven strategies that drive student success, and benefit from the wisdom gleaned from the panelists' wealth of experience. Be part of a conversation that transcends theory, offering tangible lessons learned throughout their careers. Together, let's uncover the keys to nurturing the next generation through purposeful student engagement and steadfast commitment to their success.

Ashley Burnside, director, Center for Student Success, University of Southern Mississippi

Rachael Durham, assistant director, Center for Student Success and First Year Experience, University of Mississippi

Erin Vaughn Jones, ombudsperson, University of Mississippi Medical Center

Jacqueline Mullen, assistant vice president, Student Affairs, Mississippi State University

Tonyalle Rush, associate vice president, Student Services and Enrollment Management, Northwest Mississippi Community College

FOR THIS GENERATION AND NEXT: EMPOWERING BODY & MIND

Thursday, Feb. 29 at 11:30 a.m., Manning Center (during the networking luncheon)

This session will explore the vital intersection of personal empowerment and well-being and is designed to empower attendees, foster meaningful connections, and lay the groundwork for a thriving higher education community. **Dr. Jeanna Wilkes**, special projects coordinator, Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, will share insights on the three pillars, "Self, Sisterhood, and Service," to achieve holistic success. Drawing from experiences with sorority life, commercial aviation and preventive medicine, Dr. Wilkes will dive into strategies for overcoming challenges, building resilience and creating a supportive network for current and future generations of women in higher education. We will engage in interactive discussions and activities aimed at enhancing personal empowerment and well-being.

STRIKE A POSE: SHAPING THE WONDER WOMAN IN YOU

Thursday, Feb. 29 at 12:45 p.m., Manning Center

This session will delve into the fascinating realm of non-verbal communication and its profound impact on personal and professional success. Drawing from renowned social psychologist and researcher Amy Cuddy's groundbreaking research, we will discuss the transformative power of confident body language and its potential to shape our perceptions of ourselves and others. **Andrea Jekabsons**, chief human resources officer for the University of Mississippi, will lead an exploration into the question: "Can you fake it until you become it?" Participants will gain valuable insights into the science behind short-term power posing exercises and their potential impact on personal and professional success. We will also discuss practical strategies for incorporating these exercises into daily routines, empowering to enhance presence and navigating complexities of academia with newfound assurance

SCIENCE SUPERHEROES, CULTIVATING CAREERS IN SCIENCE & RESEARCH

Thursday, Feb. 29 at 1:45 p.m., Manning Center

"Science Superheroes, Cultivating Careers in Science & Research" features accomplished women scientists and researchers from Mississippi universities. The moderated discussion will include how they cultivated successful

careers in their fields; lessons they have learned and how that translates into practical advice for other women; and how they are shaping the future of research and science by mentoring students and other women in their fields.

Priyadarshini Chakrabarti Basu, assistant professor, Pollinator Health and Apiculture, Mississippi State University

Sydney Murphy, dean, School of Graduate Studies in Health, University of Mississippi Medical Center

Donna Strum, dean, School of Pharmacy, University of Mississippi

Eden Tanner, assistant professor, Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of Mississippi

Brandi Newkirk-Turner, associate provost, Academic Affairs, Jackson State University

GAME CHANGERS: CONNECTION & EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COACHING

Thursday, Feb. 29 at 3:15 p.m., Manning Center

“Game Changers: Connection & Empowerment Through Coaching” spotlights the achievements and contributions of collegiate women coaches and sports administrators and will delve into the unique challenges and triumphs experienced by women in leadership roles within the realm of collegiate sports. Panelists will share personal journeys, insights and strategies for success and will offer invaluable perspectives on leadership, mentorship and breaking through barriers.

Anne Carr, executive director, Student-Athlete Development, Mississippi State University

Bre Henry, head coach, Volleyball, The University of Mississippi

Rachel Martin, head coach, Rifle, The University of Mississippi

Connie Price Smith, head coach, Men’s and Women’s Track & Field, The University of Mississippi

THE BALANCING ACT: SUSTAINING YOURSELF AND YOUR PROFESSION

Friday, March 1 at 9:15 a.m., Ford Center

“The Balancing Act: Sustaining Yourself and Your Profession” panel session features a group of seasoned professionals to help us navigate the important topics of wellness and work-life balance. The session includes a moderated discussion about their own work in this area; lessons they have learned and how that translates into practical advice for other women; and how they are contributing to the next generation of leaders.

Mary Collins, assistant professor, University of Southern Mississippi

Santee Ezell, director, Health Promotion and Wellness, Mississippi State University

Kashanta Jackson, director, Health and Counseling Services, Delta State University

Jazmine Kelley, director, Diversity Education and Strategic Initiatives, The University of Mississippi

Lynn Wilkins, manager, Work-Life Resources, The University of Mississippi

VIEW FROM THE TOP: LEADERSHIP LESSONS & JOURNEYS

Friday, March 1 at 10:30 a.m., Ford Center

“View from the Top: Leadership Lessons & Journeys” panel session features accomplished women administrators from Mississippi universities and community colleges. The session includes a moderated discussion about their own professional leadership journeys; lessons they have learned and how that translates into practical advice for other women; and how they are contributing to the next generation of leaders.

Nancy Maria Balach, chair and professor, Music, The University of Mississippi

Kathie Stromile Golden, provost and sr. vice president, Academic Affairs, Mississippi Valley State University

Mary Graham, president, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Regina Young Hyatt, vice president, Student Affairs, Mississippi State University

Nora Miller, president, Mississippi University for Women

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

MORNING MOTIVATION /
THURSDAY, FEB. 29, 8:45 A.M.

Elizabeth Heiskell, *The Today Show* food contributor and *Southern Living* contributing editor, was born and raised in the Mississippi Delta, an agricultural area bordered by the Mississippi River where food and fun go hand in hand. With her passion for food, fun and adventure, Elizabeth started her culinary journey in her mother's and grandmother's kitchen. Chef Heiskell has prepared food for such notables as the Duchess of York, Former Vice President Al Gore, Chef Thomas Keller, Priscilla Presley and the governors of Mississippi, Texas and Arizona.

As lead culinary instructor at the Viking Cooking School in nearby Greenwood, world headquarters of the Viking Range Corporation, she has represented Viking on exclusive Silver Sea cruises through Spain, Portugal and Hawaii. With all her culinary events and classes, Elizabeth adds fun and vitality.

In 2011, Elizabeth moved from the Delta flatland to the hills of Oxford, Mississippi. There, she and her husband, Luke, built and ran Woodson Ridge Farm with a little help from their three girls. Elizabeth's catering company, Elizabeth Heiskell Catering, is deeply rooted in the community.

In collaboration with the University of Mississippi, Elizabeth caters events from fundraising for Rowan Oak to dinners in the Chancellor's home to sororities and fraternities on campus. Football season and entertaining are huge in Oxford and so are Elizabeth's tailgate orders. Since leaving the vegetables and their farm, Elizabeth and Luke remain busy with Whiskey Ranch, Luke's grass-fed cattle and Elizabeth's catering, book tours, Today Show appearances and speaking engagements.

Elizabeth is *The Today Show* food contributor. She has done appearances on Food Network's *The Kitchen* and was a guest judge on the popular Food Network show, *Chopped*. She also has appeared on multiple television segments such as CMT's *Pickler* and *Ben Show*, the Hallmark Channel and *Fox and Friends*. Elizabeth is a *Southern Living* contributing editor. Debutante Farmer, her bloody mary mix, was born on Woodson Ridge Farms and is a winner of the coveted Southern Living Food Award for one of the best products in the South.

In October 2017, Elizabeth published her best-selling cookbook, *What Can I bring?* The following October she was asked to redo the Southern Living's best-selling cookbook of all times, *Southern Living Parties*. Elizabeth released her fourth book, *Come On Over*, in May 2021. This amazing read provides recipes for "any days that life may throw your way either summer days, or diet days, or lake days or school days."



HEISKELL



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THURSDAY, FEB. 29, 9:30 A.M.

Alexandria White is the senior vice president at Reboot Accel, a consulting agency based in Silicon Valley. She collaborates with an impressive list of clients, including Cisco, Faire, Oracle, Stanford University, HumanGood and Samsung.

As a corporate strategist, Dr. White is instrumental in designing, implementing and managing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) initiatives. With over a decade in higher education, she intentionally weaves DEIB into the core of organizations, merging data-driven strategies with profound insights into human behavior.

Broadening her DEIB advocacy, Dr. White hosts the “Call In” podcast, diving into DEIB topics and the delicate balance between ‘calling in’ and ‘calling out.’

In 2023, she penned her third book, *50 Questions Inclusive Leaders Ask: How Forward-Thinking Leaders Stay Current*. In 2016, she founded S.A.M.S. (Student Affairs Moms), the preeminent online community for mothers in student affairs. Her forthcoming book will spotlight the experiences of working mothers on college campuses.

Dr. White’s academic accolades include degrees from Indiana University, Ball State and the University of Mississippi. She currently resides in Oxford, Mississippi, but often visits Bloomington, Indiana, where her daughter, Emory, attends college.



WHITE

FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 8:30 A.M.

Natashia Gregoire is a communications and marketing executive who has provided strategic communications leadership for some of the world’s most recognized brands. Natashia currently oversees internal communications for all of Amazon’s Operations Businesses in the Americas, supporting an employee base of more than 1 million. At Amazon, Natashia also leads global internal communications for key operations functions such as Robotics, Engineering, Real Estate and Procurement.

Prior to joining Amazon, Natashia spent 10 years in various communications leadership roles at FedEx, leading programs that boosted the FedEx culture and reputation. She worked alongside the company’s most senior leaders to implement programs that expanded access to opportunities for people all over the world.

Natashia’s career spans more than 20 years across a variety of communications disciplines. She is a graduate of the University of Mississippi School of Business and a Hall of Fame inductee. A native of the Caribbean island of Dominica, Natashia was the first black woman and first international student to serve as editor the university’s daily newspaper.

The daughter of an entrepreneur and an educator, Natashia is passionate about causes that connect marginalized communities to a world of opportunities. She enjoys public speaking and has addressed audiences worldwide. Natashia and her family live in Memphis, TN.



GREGOIRE

PANELISTS

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION THROUGH STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND SUCCESS / THURSDAY, FEB. 29, 10:30 A.M.

Ashley C. Burnside is director of the Center for Student Success at the University of Southern Mississippi. In her role, she leads success and retention-based initiatives, student outreach, staff operations and retention-based scholarship awarding. She served in several positions within Winthrop University's Academic Success Center located in Rock Hill, South Carolina, prior to her tenure at USM.

Ashley is passionate about student access and equity, which is reflected in her research interests and her professional activity. Ashley received her Ed.D. in higher education management from the University of Georgia. She obtained a B.A. in political science and M.A. in teaching from Winthrop University. She also holds an M.A. in international studies from the University of South Carolina – Columbia.



Rachael Durham is the assistant director for first-year experience with the Center for Student Success & First-Year Experience at the University of Mississippi. Additionally, she serves as an instructor for EDHE 105, the Freshman Year Experience course, EDHE 305, the Transfer Experience Course and is an adjunct instructor for Business Communications in the School of Business. Rachael completed her B.A. degree in journalism with an emphasis in public relations from the University of Mississippi in 2008, her M.A. in higher education/student personnel in 2012 and her Ed.D. in higher education in 2023. Her 16-year career in higher education at the university has included roles associated with Admissions, Campus Visits, Orientation and Advising, and currently with First-Year Experience, overseeing the largest class offering and its instructors at the University of Mississippi. Rachael resides in Oxford with her family including her two children, Grady and Logan.



Jackie Mullen is the assistant vice president of Student Affairs at Mississippi State University where she is responsible for areas under Student Experience including student activities, fraternity and sorority life, student leadership and community engagement and the Colvard Student Union and Event Services.

She graduated from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, with a B.S. in business administration-marketing. She received her master of education in higher education and student affairs from the University of South Carolina and her Ph.D. in educational leadership from Mississippi State University. Prior to serving as the assistant vice president of Student Affairs, Dr. Mullen served as the assistant dean of students at Mississippi State University where she worked with the Departments of the Center for Student Activities and Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life in the Division of Student Affairs.

Dr. Mullen has worked at Mississippi State University for almost 16 years. She lives in Starkville, Mississippi with her husband, Tabor, and their son, Carson, and loves to attend sporting events and is active in her church and Starkville community.



Tonyalle Rush is the associate vice president for Student Services and Enrollment Management at Northwest Mississippi Community College. She earned a B.S. in interdisciplinary studies with emphases in biology, counselor education and computer technology. She earned a M.S. in counselor education with an emphasis in student affairs in higher education from Mississippi State University. She completed her graduate certificate in psychology from Western New Mexico University. She earned a doctor of education in higher education from the University of Mississippi.

She began her professional career at Mississippi State University in 2006, serving in Disability Support Services and TRiO Student Support Services. Dr. Rush joined Northwest Mississippi Community College and has served in various roles, including career technical counselor, director of evening programs and district director of the Career Center since 2009. Dr. Rush has been an adjunct instructor for Northwest since 2011 and has taught general psychology classes online since 2015.

Dr. Rush is currently the Immediate Past President of the Mississippi Community College Student Affairs Association, the Mississippi State Director for the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and a member of the Southern Association for College Student Affairs. She is a 2017 Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy graduate. She is a 2023 graduate of Leadership DeSoto and is currently in the Community College Policy Fellows Program. Her mission in life is primarily focused on helping students achieve their maximum potential.

Dr. Rush currently resides in Southaven, Mississippi. She is a member of Brown Missionary Baptist Church and the DeSoto County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. She loves to volunteer, read, travel and enjoy life in her spare time.



RUSH

Erin Vaughn Jones, has nearly 15 years of experience in higher education where she has dedicated her time to holistically developing students for success in and outside of the classroom. Currently, Dr. Jones serves as the inaugural ombudsperson for the University of Mississippi Medical Center where she serves as an multi-partial and confidential resource, facilitating open communication and conflict resolution for students, residents, faculty and staff within the organization.

Prior to her tenure at UMMC, Erin served in a variety of positions at Hinds Community College including dean of students, housing director and director for instruction and intervention equals retention and graduation. She also has professional experiences at Jackson State University and Louisiana State University. Dr. Jones also has taught in the higher education program at Boston University's Wheelock School of Education and Human Development.

She holds a B.A. from the University of Southern Mississippi in English education, a M.S. in college student administrative services from the University of Central Arkansas and a Ph.D. in educational leadership, research and counseling from Louisiana State University.

Active in her community, Dr. Jones is a 20-year member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. and involved in Junior Auxiliary, Clinton, Mississippi. Erin and her husband, Alonzo, are parents to an active 3-year old, Nate.



JONES

SCIENCE SUPERHEROES, CULTIVATING CAREERS IN SCIENCE & RESEARCH / THURSDAY, FEB. 29, 1:45 P.M.

Priya Chakrabarti Basu is currently an assistant professor at the Department of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology, Entomology and Plant Pathology at Mississippi State University. Dr. Basu studies the interactive impacts of multiple stressors on bees, for example poor nutrition, pesticides and climate change using a wide array of multidisciplinary techniques across fields such as physiology, toxicology, functional biology, multiomics-based approaches and neuroethology. She is currently serving as the secretary/treasurer of the American Association of Professional Apiculturists and the North American chair of the nutrition taskforce for COLOSS, the international bee organization. In addition to the research community, Dr. Basu enjoys working with stakeholders, policymakers and the general community in protecting bee pollinators and raising pollinator awareness. She is also a children's book author to help spread pollinator awareness among young readers.



Sydney Murphy has served as dean of the School of Graduate Studies in the Health Sciences at the University of Mississippi Medical Center since July 2023. In addition to this role, Dr. Murphy is director of the SGSHS Office of Post-doctoral Studies and associate professor of pharmacology and toxicology, with a secondary appointment as associate professor of population health science.

A lifelong resident of Madison, Dr. Murphy graduated from Mississippi State University with a B.S. in biochemistry and molecular biology before earning an M.S. in biomedical sciences and Ph.D. in physiology and biophysics, both from UMMC. She also completed a post-doctoral research fellowship in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology.

In addition to several journal articles that focus mainly on hypertension and preeclampsia, Dr. Murphy has been awarded more than \$1 million in funding from grantors including the American Heart Association and National Institutes of Health.

Her UMMC honors include a bronze Excellence in Research medal in 2018 and recognition as a Diversity and Inclusion Champion in 2021. In 2019, the Mississippi Business Journal named her to its Top 40 Under 40 ranking. In her free time, Dr. Murphy enjoys playing outdoors with her two children and dog, traveling and sewing.



Donna Strum graduated from the University of Mississippi with her B.S. in Pharmacy in 1995 and her Ph.D. in Pharmacy Administration in 1999. She then began her career in the Department of Pharmacy Practice at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Pharmacy. She returned to the University of Mississippi in 2008 to serve as chair and professor in the Department of Pharmacy Administration. In 2017, she became an associate provost in the Office of the Provost at the University of Mississippi. Dr. Strum assisted with a wide array of administrative matters dealing with the academic budget, academic policies, diversity and equity issues, student retention and human resources. Additionally, she developed the Career-Life Program and chaired the Pay Equity Salary Taskforce. In 2020, she received the Outstanding Staff Award for the Executive category from the university. In February 2022, she was named Dean of the School of Pharmacy and Executive Director of the Research Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences.



Eden Tanner completed her undergraduate degree with honors in advanced science as a chemistry major at the University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. She earned her doctorate in physical and theoretical chemistry at the University of Oxford under the supervision of Professor Richard Compton, with a thesis titled “Nanoelectrochemistry in Room Temperature Ionic Liquids.” Her love of ionic liquids brought her to Harvard University as a postdoctoral research fellow working with Samir Mitragotri. As of August 2020, Dr. Tanner is an assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at the University of Mississippi. Her lab, the Tanner Lab, works at the interface of chemistry and bioengineering to solve outstanding biomedic



TANNER

Brandi L. Newkirk-Turner, is the associate provost for Academic Affairs and a professor in the Department of Communicative Disorders at Jackson State University. She received her B.A. in audiology and speech sciences from Michigan State University, her M.A. in speech pathology and audiology from Western Michigan University, and her Ph.D. in communication disorders from Louisiana State University.



NEWKIRK-TURNER

Her research examines issues relevant to speech-language assessments of child speakers of African American English; best practices in preparing graduate students to serve culturally and linguistically diverse populations; and barriers, opportunities and potential impacts in reducing or eliminating equity gaps of underserved student populations in higher education. She is well published and has secured more than \$8 million dollars in competitive grant funding.

As associate provost for Academic Affairs at Jackson State University, Dr. Newkirk-Turner has been responsible for leading a re-design of the General Education curriculum, collaborating with the Office of Registrar and Records to spearhead new academic policies and overseeing three critical units at the university: Division of Graduate Studies, JSUOnline and the University Library.

GAME CHANGERS, CONNECTIONS & EMPOWERMENT THROUGH COACHING / THURSDAY, FEB. 29, 3:15 P.M.

Ann Carr, a 25-year veteran in athletic administration at Mississippi State University and a former Lady Bulldog athlete, serves as Executive Director of Student-Athlete Development/Senior Woman Administrator.



CARR

Carr has served as academic advisor for most women’s sports and football, director for life skills, as well as M-Club and SAAC Advisor until June of 2006 when she was elevated to Associate Athletic Director/Senior Woman Administrator. There she was the sport administrator to all of the female sports as well as remained having oversight of the Life Skills Department. Under the leadership of John Cohen, she was elevated to Executive Senior Associate Athletic Director/SWA where she works with State’s female sports and their sport administrators, as well as with the Life Skills Department, the Academic Center, Sports Medicine and Performance department and their day-to-day performance. Carr also works with other areas on campus that work hand-in-hand with the athletic department.

A native of Brookhaven, Mississippi, Carr was a four-year letter winner (1986-90) in basketball at Mississippi State. Carr, a 1990 graduate of State, also earned her Master’s degree in counseling from MSU in 1992. Her daughter, Khristian, recently graduated from Mississippi State and was a member of the volleyball program.

Bre Henry leads the Ole Miss Rebels volleyball program in her third season as head coach. Prior to arriving in Oxford, Henry spent three seasons as an assistant at Santa Clara and began her coaching career as a graduate assistant with one of the nation's elite programs at Nebraska.

Over the course of her career as a graduate assistant, assistant coach and head coach, Henry helped produce four All-Americans, 12 All-Region honorees and won the 2017 NCAA crown with Nebraska. Throughout her entire career, she worked alongside some of the top coaches in the nation. At Ole Miss, she changed the culture, shifted the direction of the program and created an environment where student-athletes and staff are a family while still competing at a high level in the SEC.

A former standout student-athlete at Long Beach State, Henry played both indoor and beach volleyball, earning ACVA All-American Honors for the 2014 indoor season and winning the 2013 beach National Championship. She helped lead the 49ers to a 27-5 record and a perfect 16-0 mark in the Big West Conference during her senior campaign. After graduating, Henry continued her playing career professionally in the Philippines and Switzerland in 2015 and 2016.

Rachel Martin is in her first season as head coach of the Ole Miss rifle program after one season as an assistant. Martin helped guide the Rebels to their third straight NCAA Championship appearance, finishing in fourth place and highest smallbore placement in program history. Martin brings both collegiate and international shooting experience to the Rebels, as well as two years of head coaching experience at Nebraska, where she guided the Huskers to NCAA Championship appearances in both years.

A former competitive shooter herself, Martin rewrote the record books at Nebraska from 2014-17, claiming an individual NCAA Championship in smallbore in 2015 and earning seven All-American honors throughout her career. She has been a member of the USA Shooting World Cup team since 2013, representing Team USA in seven World Cups and is a seven-time national champion. Martin also served as an alternate for Team USA at the 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

Connie Price-Smith is in her ninth season in charge of the Ole Miss track & field and cross country programs. She is a four-time Olympian and USA Track & Field Hall of Fame member. In 23 seasons as a head coach at both Ole Miss and Southern Illinois, Price-Smith has collected 16 NCAA event titles and mentored 226 All-Americans on the track.

Since arriving in Oxford in 2015, Price-Smith and her staff have led the Rebels to new heights, winning eight NCAA individual titles (11 champions), 13 NCAA runners-up, 153 First or Second-Team All-Americans, 284 NCAA points, 67 SEC individual champions and a bevy of the best team finishes in program history at both the SEC and NCAA levels. The Ole Miss men earned the first two SEC titles in program history in cross country back-to-back in 2018 and 2019 and numerous teams setting new program record conference and national finishes — highlighted by an overall record fourth-place finish by the men's cross country team in 2016 and a sixth-place showing for the Rebel women indoors in 2022.

In addition to her time at Ole Miss and previously building a national powerhouse at Southern Illinois from 2002-15, Price-Smith has extensive experience on the international circuit and in the national leadership of the track & field community, culminating with her appointment as Team USA's women's track & field head coach for the 2016 Rio Olympics.



HENRY



MARTIN



PRICE-SMITH

During her decade-and-a-half career as a world-class thrower, Price-Smith was a 25-time U.S. champion in the shot put and discus and a member of 34 international U.S. squads. She participated in four Olympic Games with a best finish of fifth in the shot put in her home country at the 1996 Atlanta Games, the best finish by a U.S. woman in the event since 1960.

THE BALANCING ACT, SUSTAINING YOURSELF AND YOUR PROFESSION / FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 9:15 A.M.

Mary Jane Collins is the assistant nurse anesthesia program coordinator and assistant professor at the University of Southern Mississippi. She earned her doctor of health administration from the University of Mississippi Medical Center, completing a post-doctoral fellowship in health policy. Dr. Collins holds leadership positions on several state and national boards, committees and professional organizations, currently serving as the president of the Mississippi Association of Nurse Anesthetists and fellow of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. Her research interests include educational innovation, pharmacology, health policy and quality initiatives. A native of Iuka, Mississippi, Dr. Collins practices clinical nurse anesthesia in Meridian, where she lives with her husband, Al, and three daughters.



Santee Ezell serves as the director of Health Promotion and Wellness at Mississippi State University. Within her role she advises two student organizations which are the award-winning Healthy Dawgs Peer Educators and Aspiring Minorities in Health Professions student organization along with serving as a health promotion instructor. She received a B.A. in Sociology with two minors in community health sciences and nonprofit studies from the University of Southern Mississippi along with a M.S. in community development with an emphasis in sustainability from Delta State University.



After graduating, Ezell started her public health and prevention career that later led to higher education. Since then, she has worked at two universities and has spent the last eight years serving college students through prevention education, peer education, policy development and public health. She believes the greatest person you can ever be is a servant and to always leave a place better than you found it.

Kashanta Jackson has 25 years of service in higher education where she recently retired as the director of Health and Counseling Services at Delta State University. She has served as dean of Counseling and Advising and dean of Students at Hinds Community College, lead counselor and interim dean of students at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.



Jackson is a licensed professional counselor for the State of Mississippi, a licensed professional counselor supervisor for the State of Mississippi, a board certified tele-mental health therapist, an approved clinical supervisor and a national certified counselor.

She is a two-time graduate of Delta State University where she received her bachelor's degree in psychology and Master of Education degree in counseling. She has a passion for helping others achieve excellence and for supervising counselors in training. Jackson is a member of several professional organizations including Alpha Kappa Alpha, Incorporated.

Jazmine D. Kelley, originally from Memphis, Tennessee, received her B.S. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology with a pre-medicine concentration as well as her M.S. in food science, nutrition, and health promotion from Mississippi State University. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in higher education at the University of Mississippi where she studies the relationship between student success and institutional effectiveness for systemically excluded groups.

She is a certified health education specialist, clinical health promotion and wellness coach, certified wellness practitioner, certified physical trainer and independent author of *Resilience Reimagined: The Ultimate Guide to Improve Your Mental Wellness in 30 Days*. She currently serves as the diversity education and strategic initiatives director at the University of Mississippi.

Jazmine has an unwavering commitment to student well-being as well as diversity, equity, inclusion and social justice within higher education. During her free time, Jazmine enjoys reading, journaling and hanging out with her family and friends.



KELLEY

Lynn Adams Wilkins is the work-life resources manager for Human Resources at the University of Mississippi. In this role, she assists employees with wellness resources, manages a network of lactation spaces, supports student parents and works to expand childcare options on campus. Her experience includes grant-writing, arts-based community development and communication/public relations. To create balance in her life, Wilkins loves spending time with her husband, kids and friends, exploring national parks and other great places and reading.



WILKINS

VIEW FROM THE TOP, LEADERSHIP LESSONS & JOURNEYS / FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 10:30 A.M.

Nancy Maria Balach is chair and professor of the Department of Music at the University of Mississippi. She is also director of the University of Mississippi's Institute for the Arts, CEO and artistic director of the Living Music Resource™ and a faculty member in the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College. She is a versatile soprano with vast performing experience across North America with opera companies and symphony orchestras as well as being featured in leading roles on Albany Records, Newport Classic, New World Records, VOX Classics and Operetta Archives. She is an advocate of new music and promotes the work of underrepresented composers and has presented her research internationally. Balach recently completed two terms as the Mississippi District Governor for the National Association of Teachers of Singing, was a 2022 Mississippi Arts Commission Artist Fellowship Recipient in the Solo Vocal Category and a fellow for the 2021-22 SEC Academic Leadership Development Program.



BALACH

Kathie Stromile Golden, provost/senior vice president for academic affairs at Mississippi Valley State University, has more than 40 years of experience in higher education. During her tenure at MVSU, she has served as director of international programs and assistant to the president's office, professor of political science, associate vice president for academic affairs and director of the Delta Research and Cultural Institute.

Dr. Stromile Golden was a Fulbright Lecturer/Researcher at The Academy for Public Administration under the President of Azerbaijan Republic; served as partnership coordinator and budget manager for The International Development Partnerships Activity at the United Negro College Fund Special Programs Corporation;



GOLDEN

held administrative positions at Morris Brown College, Morgan State University and Southern University; and has been on the faculty at Clark Atlanta University, University of Colorado, Texas Tech University and Arkansas State University. She holds B.A. and M.A. degrees in political and social Sciences from Southern University, a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Kentucky and was a Chancellor's post-graduate fellow at the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana.

She is the recipient of numerous service and leadership awards, lecturer/research grants for curriculum development and has directed higher education partnership programs in Iraq, Liberia, Mauritania, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. She is executive director of the National Conference of Black Political Scientists and director of the Graduate Assistantship Program. Her research and publications focus on communist and post-communist societies, public and environmental health, sex trafficking and international education.

Mary S. Graham has served as president of Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College for the past 13 years. Bringing over 30 years of expertise in the higher education sector, she stands as a visionary and transformative leader, sparking thought and catalyzing change. Dr. Graham, who holds a Ph.D. in higher education administration, fully embraces the community college philosophy and the institution's tradition of educational excellence. Under Dr. Graham's leadership, MGCCC has achieved notable recognition, both in the state of Mississippi and nationally. Dr. Graham serves on many boards including the Board of Directors of the American Association of Community Colleges, the Phi Theta Kappa Presidential Advisory Board, and the Mississippi Power Association Board of Directors. She is married to Wayne Graham, and they have three children: Sarah, Michael and Anna.

Regina Young Hyatt was appointed vice president for Student Affairs at Mississippi State University in July 2015, and is the first woman to serve as vice president for Student Affairs in MSU history. In her role, she provides leadership for the Division of Student Affairs which includes a wide range of departments and programs focused on student wellbeing and safety, student belonging and engagement and student success. Prior to her role at MSU, Dr. Hyatt worked in a variety of student affairs roles at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, the University of South Florida and the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. She earned a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in college student personnel, both from Western Illinois University. Her doctoral work was completed at the University of South Florida in higher education administration and her research interests relate to women in higher education, student persistent and success and crisis management.

Nora Roberts Miller is the 15th President of Mississippi University for Women, and the first alumni of the institution to serve in that role. She has bachelor's degrees in business administration and accounting from The W and an MBA from Mississippi State University. Previously, she was the chief financial officer for The W from 2001–2018. She is a CPA and is active in a number of organizations, including the Mississippi Chapter of the International Women's Forum, the Columbus Air Force Base Community Council and the Rotary Club of Columbus. A Leadership Mississippi graduate, Miller was named one of the Top 50 Businesswomen of the Year by the Mississippi Business Journal. Other honors include being named a 2019 Woman of Distinction by the Girl Scouts Heart of the South Council and a Rotary District 6820 Champion of Change. Miller received the Mississippi Distinguished Civilian Medal of Honor for her responsiveness to the soldiers and airmen of the Mississippi National Guard.



SPEAKERS

CONFERENCE EMCEE

Erica Avent is currently an assistant professor of teacher education at the University of Mississippi. Prior to this position, she was the coordinator with the LuckyDay Residential College. She has inspired and motivated Mississippi school children for 17 years, as a classroom teacher in grades 3-6 and as a school and district administrator.

A native of Forest, Mississippi, Dr. Avent served as a board member for the Mississippi Association of Educators. Additionally, she is a past mentor teacher with the Mississippi Teacher Fellowship Program. She is a National Board Certified Teacher who earned her Ed.S., M.A. and B.A from the University of Mississippi. In 2020, she received her Ed.D. in Elementary Education with an emphasis on African American teacher recruitment and retention in K-12.

She has expertise in community engagement, teacher mentorship and student success in K-12. She is a seasoned educator who has developed community initiatives and programs targeting the inclusiveness of African American students and communities. Her focus has been on helping diversify the teacher pipeline so that all students can see representations of African American teachers in their schools. She currently resides in Oxford, Mississippi, with her husband, Shawn, and her daughters, Aubrey and Jordyn.



AVENT

WELCOME, THURSDAY, FEB. 29, 8:30 A.M.

Charlotte Fant Pegues, WHEMN state coordinator and vice chancellor for Student Affairs at the University of Mississippi, leads a team of professionals who are committed to providing exceptional services and creating an environment where all students can be successful. During her 30 years of service to the university, she has served as assistant vice chancellor for student affairs, director of admissions and assistant provost and registrar. Dr. Fant Pegues earned several degrees from the university including a B.A. in Psychology, an M.A. in Education and a Ph.D. in Leadership and Counselor Education. She holds an academic appointment in the School of Education as an assistant professor of leadership and counselor education. She and her husband, Tee, enjoy living in Oxford and love being a part of the university community and family.



PEGUES

NETWORKING LUNCH / THURSDAY, FEB. 29, 11:30 A.M.

Jeanna D. Wilkes brings over eleven years of experience in higher education, currently serving as special projects coordinator and assistant professor of preventive medicine at the University of Mississippi Medical Center. She was pivotal in enhancing master's and doctoral programs in population health science, biostatistics and data science in UMMC's newest school, the John D. Bower School of Population Health, which is the fourth of its kind in the U.S. Dr. Wilkes contributed to graduate and doctoral programs and student success and development as a director of student life and orientation and graduate admissions and studies coordinator while at Delta State University.



WILKES

Holding a doctor of health administration degree from the University of Mississippi and an MBA, a Master of Commercial Aviation and a Bachelor of Science from DSU, Dr. Wilkes is engaged in various grant-funded projects and has made contributions to initiatives such as the NHLBI's Graduate Training and Education Center with the Jackson Heart Study, U.S. HHS's Assets for Independence, and U.S. Department of Education TRIO SSS. Her expertise includes advising first-gen undergraduates, NCAA Division II student-athletes and international students, and developing student success and faculty excellence programs. Dr. Wilkes researches faculty burnout and wellness, notably contributing to the Bower Foundation's IHL Faculty/Provider Burnout study, Quality of Academic Life and recently presented The Teaching Huddle, a faculty orientation model at the 2023 SACSCOC Conference.

Beyond her professional pursuits, Dr. Wilkes passionately advocates for #GiveBlood and #Recycle initiatives, and her interests include outdoor exploration and trivia.

STRIKE A POSE: SHAPING THE WONDER WOMAN IN YOU / THURSDAY, FEB. 29, 12:45 P.M.

Andrea Jekabsons has served as chief human resources office for the University of Mississippi since March 2020. She is passionate about employee engagement, connection and commitment as these impact an organization's success as well as student recruitment and retention. Prior to joining Ole Miss in 2006, Andrea worked in a variety of industries, including healthcare, wireless and technology. She is a worksite wellness advocate and recreation enthusiast that enjoys long walks with her dog, exercise programs, camping and traveling. A native to California and a Humboldt State University graduate, Andrea relocated to Oxford in 2005 with her husband who is a faculty member and their two children.



CLOSING REMARKS / FRIDAY, MARCH 1, 11:30 A.M.

Glenn F. Boyce serves as the 18th Chancellor of the University of Mississippi. As chancellor, he has strengthened how Ole Miss builds leaders, empowers student success, drives progress through research and economic opportunity and champions communities. Under his leadership, the university has reached record enrollment numbers, broken ground on the largest single construction project ever on the Oxford campus and launched the largest comprehensive campaign in the history of Mississippi universities to generate at least \$1.5 billion in private support. His career spans more than 40 years across secondary and post-secondary education including as Commissioner of Higher Education for the State of Mississippi where he led the state's university system.





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