

January 2025 Newsletter

RISE TO THE TOP!

Reaching. Including. Supporting. Educating

Happy New Year!

Happy New Year from Rise To The Top!

Program staff and students are excited to begin the Spring 2025 semester!

Academics

Six (6) Rise To The Top students are looking forward to beginning their spring semester classes, Tuesday, January 21, 2025. Classes our students are enrolled in this semester include:

- KIN 101: Weight Training
- MEA 240: Introduction to Video Production
- SOC 202: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- DAN 492: Special Problems (Ballet)
- ENG 223: Creative Writing I (Mixed Genre)

Student Highlight

The RISE program congratulates Dan Lewis (Junior), who was recognized as an honorary Luckyday Scholar. Congratulations, Dan!

Luckyday To The Top!



New Collaboration with Equip



The RISE program is thrilled to announce a new partnership with Equip, a software platform designed specifically to empower independence in inclusive postsecondary programs by streamlining communication, goals, progress, routines, and schedules across all support networks.

Faculty Highlight



Last semester, the RISE program hosted a Faculty Appreciation Awareness session in collaboration with the Center for Faculty Development. This session focused on celebrating the more than 50 faculty who taught students during the pilot years, as well as those who spread the word to new faculty about the RISE program. The session included a Faculty Partner panel that consisted of Dr. Jessica Valles (Sociology), Dr. Candice Salyers (Dance), and Laura Malone, MEd, (School of Interdisciplinary Studies and Professional Development).



Dr. Jessica Valles



Dr. Candice Salyers



Laura Malone, MEd

Community Engagement

Last semester, students completed approximately 166 hours of community service through volunteer work at The ARC of Southeast Mississippi, Temple Baptist Church, and opportunities with IDS' Community Volunteering Club.



Employment Preparation

Last semester, the Freshman cohort completed career interest inventories to explore careers for potential internships. This semester, the Freshman cohort will be completing educational internships focused on their career interests in preparation for on-campus internships in Fall 2025. One Sophomore will begin an on-campus internship this semester with the USM Dance Department.

The RISE program gives a shoutout to the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services for their support.



Student Life

The RISE program staff have EXCITING news! RISE has been approved to offer on-campus housing beginning Fall 2025!

Live Southern Miss

Student Highlight

The RISE program congratulates Freshman, Will Yearwood, for being selected as part of the Baptist Student Union Worship Team! In his role, Will presents the lyrics and media content on the screens during their weekly worship service, Thrive.



Student Partner Highlight



Last semester, the RISE program added Social Student Partners as extra social supports for the students. Welcome Ralea Hanna, Neusa “Lu” Nery, Mason McLellan, and Ava Clark, as new RISE Social Student Partners. Lu will transition to a Student Partner and RISE will welcome Camryn Thompson as a new Student Partner and Claire Jones and Alexandria Robertson as new Social Student Partners.

University Partner Highlight

Aspiring Special Educators Network (ASPEN) partnered with the RISE program to offer community and social events for RISE students and Student Partners.



The RISE program gives a shoutout to former ASPEN Officers, Lindsey and Grace, on their recent graduation! RISE truly appreciates the hard work and dedication you have both brought to the partnership between ASPEN and RISE.

Congratulations to new ASPEN Officers Madison Hill and Morgan Ferguson! RISE program staff look forward to seeing what they accomplish!



**For more information, contact Danielle Mullins, LMSW,
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