College of Health Newsletter

Calendar of Events:

- Deadline for Fall Freshman Admission: June 30, 2015
- Deadline for Fall Transfer Admission: August 14, 2015
- Deadline for Fall Readmission: August 18, 2015
- Mini-sessions begin: August 3, 2015
- Fall Orientation and Registration: Gulf Park Campus: August 12, 2015
- Fall Classes Begin: August 19, 2015

Southern Miss Receives Prestigious Award to Study Patient Outcomes

By Van Arnold

The University of Southern Mississippi, in collaboration with the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation, has been approved for a Eugene Washington PCORI Engagement Award by the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute that will focus on improving lives for residents of the Mississippi Delta region.

Dr. Carol Connell, professor of nutrition and food systems in the Southern Miss College of Health, will serve as director of the project titled, “Building on a culturally-sensitive network for patient-centered outcomes/comparative effectiveness dissemination.” Freddie White-Johnson, founder and executive director of the Fannie Lou Hamer Foundation and program director of USM’s Delta-based Mississippi Network for Cancer Control and Prevention, will serve as co-director.

This engagement project, one of only two awards made by PCORI in Mississippi, will focus on developing approaches by which Mississippi Delta residents can take an active role in research of patient-centered outcomes that will build on cultural strengths.

“We are very pleased to establish a formal working relationship with PCORI,” said White-Johnson. “This project will allow us to explore some of the unique strengths and challenges found in the Delta associated with disseminating and implementing research that improves patient outcomes.”

New Products Now Available for Teachers of Students with Dyslexia

By Catherine Lott

Teachers, speech-language pathologists, dyslexia specialists and other professionals who work with individuals with dyslexia/specific learning disabilities in reading now have access to a new product to aid in the remediation of dyslexia.

The DuBard School for Language Disorders at The University of Southern Mississippi released today (June 3) the Language Enhancement and Achievement Program (LEAP), a program for students who struggle with reading, writing and spelling.

LEAP is a modified DuBard Association Method® curriculum designed for students with challenges in reading, spelling and/or written language (dyslexia), or who exhibit difficulty rhyming, sounding out words, and blending sounds into words.

LEAP’s highly specialized multisensory curriculum allows the student to quickly progress through sound-symbol associations and key skills. LEAP goes directly to the problem, teaching the most critical skills to gain maximum results.

LEAP was piloted and has been used at the DuBard School for six years, and internal research shows the program’s effectiveness. On average, students diagnosed with a reading disability improved their ability to read unfamiliar words by 64 percent after 48 hours of instruction (one semester).

Alumni Spotlight

Theresa C. Foley, LCSW, LMSW, graduated from Southern Miss with a Bachelor’s in Social Work in 1993 and a Master’s in Social Work in 1995. From 1995-2011, she provided direct patient care and created and coordinated educational programs for children, teens, and adults with chronic and life-limiting medical conditions through the University of Mississippi Medical Center. While there, she also worked to guide/train various interdisciplinary providers and those in training at UMMC on the impact of social and emotional functioning on physical health. In 2014, Theresa was appointed as the Social Work Team Leader for the Southern Miss School of Social Work’s Mississippi Integrated Health and Disaster Plan program. In that role, she conducts screenings, assessments and brief behavioral treatment for underserved children, adolescents, and adults of the Mississippi Gulf Coast and provides supervision to MSW students in their final field placement.

Dean’s Blog:

Click here to see updated posts from Dr. Michael Forster.
Lt. Gov. Reeves Announces Scholarship for Students with Special Needs

By Catherine Lott

Lt. Gov. Tate Reeves visited the DuBard School for Language Disorders at The University of Southern Mississippi on Thursday, June 18 to announce new legislation to benefit students with special needs across the state.

Reeves noted that approximately 70,000 students across the state have special needs, and the average high school graduation rate of these students is less than 25 percent.

“Every child in our state deserves an opportunity for success,” Reeves said, adding that the goal of this new legislation is to provide families with the ability to seek out the specialized education that their child needs and ultimately increase graduation rates.

“This is not going to solve all of our challenges in one year, and it wasn’t designed to. It’s going to take a process.”

Managed by the Mississippi Department of Education Office of Special Education, the Equal Opportunity for Students with Special Needs Act of 2015 (SB 2695) will offer 500 $6,500 scholarships to special needs students in Mississippi for the 2015-16 school year.

Southern Miss School of Social Work Contributes to Hattiesburg Ranking

By Hanna Knowles

Youth education initiatives—that included guidance from Southern Miss’ School of Social Work—helped the City of Hattiesburg earn recognition as a “Most Livable” City in America by the 2015 City Livability Awards Program.

Mayor Johnny DuPree received the award on behalf of the city during the U.S. Conference of Mayor’s 83rd Annual Meeting in Dallas. The award recognizes mayoral leadership in developing and implementing programs that improve quality of life, focusing on leadership, creativity, and innovation.

The Hub City Access—Hattiesburg Area Youth Master Plan, a collaboration between Southern Miss’ School of Social Work, the City and the community, helped Hattiesburg earn the award. The Youth Master Plan outlines how the community can further support youth and families.

Dr. Laura Richard, assistant professor in the Southern Miss School of Social Work, was appointed by the city to write the Youth Master Plan. “I worked with youth and youth communities in the area to pinpoint the areas needing attention,” said Richard.

The plan addresses five areas of focus: early childhood development, health, safety and recreation, out-of-school time, and youth development and transitions. For each area, the steering committee and task force evaluated what was existing, what was missing, and proposed evidence-based programs that could be put in place to address service gaps.

“We are currently in the transition process from document to implementation,” said Richard. “We are offering to coordinate with community agencies that want to take part in the plan and help them with grant writing and program development.”

For more information, see https://vimeo.com/131212140.

Southern Miss Department of Public Health Receives Continued Accreditation

By Hanna Knowles

The Department of Public Health at Southern Miss has been granted continued accreditation by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) for its master of public health degree program. Accreditation is for the maximum 7-year period.

The department was visited by an external review team as part of the accreditation process in December. In preparation, an extensive self-study report was compiled.

“Accreditation translates into better job opportunities and competitive standing for graduates of the program,” said Newman. “Accreditation provides employers with knowledge and assurance that professional and academic standards have been met for students matriculating through the program.”