Southern Miss Student Success
Supporting Student Engagement and Persistence

Fall 2017 is off with a bang!

New and on-going student success initiatives are happening all over the University. This newsletter is designed to let the campus community know about a few of them now and to provide an avenue for communicating about more as the year progresses. We plan to release these newsletters monthly and showcase a few key projects that are timely for that month. Read ahead for information and calls for you to participate in efforts to get our students involved and successful in their academic life and professional development.

Don’t forget to check out the Student Success website for lots more information about resources! https://www.usm.edu/success

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ACES UNDERWAY!
A living-learning community pilot with 68 nursing freshmen... plans for 2018 on deck!

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SOPHOMORE SPARK
60 sophomores begin a year-long leadership and involvement program

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STUDENT SUCCESS SERIES
Fall 2017 collaborative series of events focused on mindset, study skills, and more...
ACES Living Learning Community, fall 2017

This fall, 68 incoming students with a declared interest in nursing are experiencing our first ACES pilot, with plans to expand.

This fall, incoming students with a declared interest in nursing were invited to participate in a pilot of the Academic Connections to Enhance Success (ACES) living-learning community. This program is designed to connect students, faculty, and staff in a unique way, with the students taking a set of classes in common, living together in a Residence Hall, and receiving intentional co-curricular programs to explore their interests further.

Moreover, in ACES, the faculty teaching the courses talk with one another, review each other’s syllabi, seek opportunities for collaboration, and work to engage and support the students’ good work in the classes. Faculty also have the opportunity to participate in co-curricular activities with the students to get to know them better outside of class.

The ACES program is in some ways an outgrowth of the highly successful Jump Scholars Program, which brings in new freshmen the month before fall starts to take classes, work with faculty, and get to know University expectations. Like Jump, the ACES program brought Housing and Residence Life, New Student and Retention Programs, and faculty from across campus together to design and implement this pilot.

Assessment of the impact on participants throughout the term will guide future iterations of ACES. For fall 2018, we plan to invite incoming freshmen exploratory students and those with majors in Biological Sciences to apply for two new ACES communities. We are also seeking faculty who would like to be part of this unique way to get connected to students and to other faculty and staff on campus (see below).

FACULTY - INTERESTED IN TEACHING IN ACES NEXT YEAR?

We are currently soliciting interested faculty to teach classes as part of our ACES curriculum for fall 2018. Faculty who teach courses required in the first year by students in nursing, biological sciences, or undeclared/exploratory are invited to apply here: [http://bit.ly/2wKZ6R0](http://bit.ly/2wKZ6R0). We are seeking faculty who are open to collaborative discussions about teaching, interested in talking through ways to support students’ academic success, and willing to participate in some extra-curricular support of students as needed. Questions? Please contact Vice Provost Amy Miller at a.c.miller@usm.edu or Dr. Megan McCay in NSRP at megan.mccay@usm.edu.
New Student and Retention Programs (NSRP) has worked with staff and faculty from across campus to offer this fall’s Student Success Series. As you’ll see in the poster above, the Series includes eight events, each targeting a different area of support that our students need. Topics like managing finances, getting ready for advisement, study skill development, and getting involved on and off campus provide students with the opportunity to learn more about how to be successful at Southern Miss. The first event was held on August 28th, and around 30 students came out to hear about growth mindset and the need to set goals, work through challenges, and maximize learning.

We encourage faculty and staff to share this information with students. We appreciate any efforts to get students to attend! If faculty or staff would like attendance rosters from any event to track their students, those can be provided, and posters and other materials are available – just contact NSRP at 601-266-5405. The series can also be found online: https://www.usm.edu/success/student-success-series

Want more info? kathleen.McBride@usm.edu or 601-266-5405
Sophomores TTT!

In Fall 2017, a new leadership program, Spark, kicks off reinvigorated efforts to engage and connect sophomores, and a series of events in “Sophomore September” help maintain and grown student connections past the freshmen year.

In August 2017, the first class of 60 participants in the Spark sophomore leadership program began their journey with an all-day intensive retreat and training on leadership. As sophomores, these students must make critical transitions into their majors and the campus community and begin thinking about their own professional development and career aspirations. Through Spark, they will get to know one another and mentors, participate in a series of academic and professional development events, and conclude by contributing the design for future cohorts of Spark sophomore experiences.

SOPHOMORE SEPTEMBER

September 2017 will be Sophomore September – a time to showcase programming specifically devoted to getting our second year students to connected to one another and more engaged with their own goal-setting and planning. Look for signs to pop up around campus with more details! Encourage sophomores you know to join in.

Do you have events happening in your area that would be a good opportunity for sophomore students? Contact Lauren Richards in New Student and Retention Programs: Lauren.Richards@usm.edu or 601-266-4218.

September 9th: Sophomore tailgate! (NSRP) 3-5pm by McLemore Hall

September 19th: “Sophomore Pathways” event to explore academic majors and career pathways (NSRP and Career Services)
  6pm Union Room B

September 27th: Ask an Eagle! Student panel for peer advice on successfully navigating the sophomore year
  6pm Location TBD
During 2017-18, the ACUE Faculty Development Institute was established to give faculty the opportunity to participate in an intensive community-based educational opportunity around learning evidence-based teaching strategies for student success. Faculty who were selected as ACUE Faculty Fellows joined colleagues for a semester’s worth of online course modules complemented by group discussion and implementation of new teaching techniques. Each fully completed semester of the Institute resulted in faculty receiving a USM Certificate in one of the following three areas:

- Active Learning
- Assessment of Teaching and Learning
- Effective Course Design

Completion of all three terms results in earning a Certificate in Effective College Instruction from the American Council on Education. We are very proud to say that 15 faculty from Southern Miss have completed all three terms, and 19 more are on track to do so.

Join us during fall 2017 for one or more of our Teaching Forums at the Center for Faculty Development, all of which will showcase some of what the ACUE Faculty Fellows have been learning through their experiences:

### Open Educational Resources and USM’s Open Textbook Initiative

**How can the library assist faculty with finding and using free resources in their classes?**
– Tuesday, October 3 from 3:30-4:45 in room 319 of the International Center

### Encouraging Diversity and Inclusiveness in Your Classroom

**How can faculty members create positive, respectful learning experiences for all students in our diverse classrooms?**
– Thursday, November 2 from 3:30-4:45 in room 319 of the International Center

[https://www.usm.edu/center-faculty-development/teaching-forums](https://www.usm.edu/center-faculty-development/teaching-forums)
Did you know?

**KEY ACADEMIC CALENDAR DATES**

October 4: Interim grades due for all full-term classes  
October 9: Second half-term classes begin  
October 11: Grades due for 8W1 classes  
October 19-20: Fall Break  
October 27: Last day for students to request to drop with a W  
November 1: Last day to apply for May 2018 graduation without a fee  
December 11: Semester grades due

For a list of second half-term classes, see: [https://www.usm.edu/registrar/class-schedule-guide](https://www.usm.edu/registrar/class-schedule-guide)

The [Gateways to Completion](https://www.usm.edu/registrar/class-schedule-guide) program, as part of the QEP, is working to improve student learning in five historically difficult courses. Through modified class structures, innovative teaching techniques, the use of undergraduate Learning Assistants and more we are seeing significant improvement in the grades earned by students in those classes:

![Percentage of Students Earning Below a C](https://www.usm.edu/registrar/class-schedule-guide)

For more information about the QEP, contact Dr. Julie Howdeshell, Director of Quality Enhancement, at 601-266-4525.

The [Office of Online Learning](https://www.usm.edu/registrar/class-schedule-guide) is available to provide support to faculty, staff, and students working with online classes and programs. Whether it’s the transition to Canvas or more general questions about online delivery, Online Learning is available to help on the 3rd floor of the International Center, 601-266-5518, or online@usm.edu. Canvas info: [https://www.usm.edu/canvas](https://www.usm.edu/canvas)

[Student Support Services Program](https://www.usm.edu/registrar/class-schedule-guide) is a TRIO grant-funded program that provides a community of support to qualifying students. SSSP offers tutoring, computer lab space, and one-on-one support to students. For more information, see: [https://www.usm.edu/federal-trio-programs/trio-student-support-services-program](https://www.usm.edu/federal-trio-programs/trio-student-support-services-program)

[Canvas](https://www.usm.edu/canvas) info: [https://www.usm.edu/canvas](https://www.usm.edu/canvas)

**CAREER SERVICES** offers a wide range of opportunities for students in all majors to explore their interests, find a major, learn how to translate their experiences onto a resume, find employment on or off-campus, and locate internships and other career-readying pathways. For more information, stop by the first floor of McLemore Hall or review the Career Guide, available fully online: [https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/career-services/images/careerguide-17-18.pdf](https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/career-services/images/careerguide-17-18.pdf)