Letter from the editor

Dr. Anderson, Vice President for Student Affairs

Meet the New Dean of Students

Stasia Cantrell has extensive experience in higher education, serving in a variety of roles throughout her career in student affairs. Her expertise in student success, student crisis management, counseling services and student support services will be critical as we expand our efforts to develop healthy, connected and learning-focused students and communities.

Before joining the Southern Miss family, Stasia served as the dean of students and the DEI coordinator at Mississippi University for Women. She holds a Bachelor of Arts with a concentration in psychology from Millikin University, a Master of Science in counselor education, and is nearing completion of her Doctor of Philosophy in counselor education, both from Mississippi State University.

As the associate vice president for Student Affairs and director of student affairs, Stasia and her team of staff members at Southern Miss, Stasia will be responsible for supervisory oversight of the Dean of Students office; Office of Disability Accommodations; Counseling Services; Student Health Services; Center for Military Veterans, Service Members and Families; and Student Support and Outreach.

On November 12, 2019, we look forward to welcoming other staff members and students to our campus to get to know Stasia and see her as she serves as the keynote speaker for the National Society of Leadership and Success Induction Ceremony. She engaged the crowd using just one word—INVEST. Stasia stated, “There are many qualities of a leader, but overall leadership is about influencing one another.” She believes in order to become successful, leaders must invest in themselves and their time here at Southern Miss.

What does it mean to INVEST?


Vision – See yourself as a leader first. Education – Expand your knowledge and skills in your personal, work and school life. Develop these opportunities allow you to meet and interact with others that are different from you. Skills – Practice your skills. Becoming a leader doesn’t happen overnight. Continuously work on the skills you gain, put yourself out there, and don’t be afraid of new positions and new things.

Time – Spend time investing in yourself. It takes time to become a leader, so start putting yourself in a place where you can learn.

In closing, Stasia left the crowd with these words, “Keep growing, expanding and improving — you will make your unique contribution just like the students here at Southern Miss!”

Welcome to the Division of Student Affairs

Dr. Maleta Wilson - Faculty and Student Life

General Wellness - Faculty and Student Life

Stasia Cantrell - Dean of Students/Associate VP for Student Life

Amanda Jo Lasses - Office of Leadership and Student Involvement

Amber Travieso – Conference and Event Services

Tuyetnhi Nguyen - Housing and Residence Life

Sarah Bienvenu - Student Counseling Services

Eagle Employment

The Division of Student Affairs proudly employs engaged professionals helping our students achieve their goals and make their way to the top.

At the core of the work we do in Student Affairs is the work that our dean of students does each day to provide support to students.

This semester we welcomed Stasia Cantrell as our new dean of students and director of students. It is clear already that Ms. Cantrell is student-focused, knowledgeable and well on her way to developing a love for our Golden Eagles.

As we look to the spring semester, we anticipate in our new director of Fraternity and Sorority Life, Dr. Malika Wilson. Dr. Wilson comes from California State University, Fullerton as the assistant director of Fraternity and Sorority Life.

Join me in welcoming Dr. Wilson to our campus.

Our students are achieving amazing things both inside and outside of the classroom. They continue to give all of us in Student Affairs reasons to be proud of the work that we do and proud of being Golden Eagles.

Every day, they remind us how lucky we are to work in Southern Miss. Stay tuned as we continue to top.

The Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA)

The number of students served by the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) is at an all-time high. 71%. The diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is the most covered disability at Southern Miss. Psychiatric disabilities, neurological, sensory, and Depression are diagnosed being more frequently than ever before and could someday surpass ADHD as the most reported disability. Each semester, ODA administers over 1,000 exams and returns them safely to the instructors. Last year (2018-19), ODA administered 2,140 exams during the fall and spring semesters. It is common for ODA to administer exams over multiple semesters and through finals of week. Although ODA is not responsible for ADA compliance on the Southern Miss campus, they are involved in helping make sure the ADA law is followed by contacting the correct department when a violation is reported. ODA has a staff of five highly trained personnel who are responsible for making sure students that have been approved for classroom, housing, dietary accommodations receive them in a timely manner. ODA collaborates closely with Housing and Residential Life, Early Start, TRIO, Student Counseling Services, the Moffitt Health Center, Dean of Students office, faculty and staff in a daily basis. These departmental organizations along with other offices on campus, have been extremely cooperative in helping ODA succeed in their goal of accommodating students with disabilities in their commitment to developing healthy, connected and learning-focused students and communities.

F45 Coming to the Payne Center

Coming this spring, the Payne Center will introduce a new boutique fitness routine to the campus with a program geared toward everyday movements. Features of this popular fitness franchise include over 4,000 exercises with a different workout each session and trainer support and motivation along the way. F45 membership options will allow Southern Miss students, faculty, and staff, along with the community for free. For more information on F45 or to watch a video overview of the program, visit f45training.com.

Fraternity and Sorority Life

FSL Tailgate | Welcomed prospective students and families to enjoy a tailgate with current FSL members in conjunction with the Office of Admissions Black and Gold Day. 2,217 students and 383 family members registered for the event.

Increased Funding | Increased the overall office operating budget and funding for additional staff members. At full staff, the office will be home to one director, one assistant director/College Panhel HIE advisor, one coordinator/Interfraternity Council advisor, and one office coordinator.

Inmate/Recruitment | During the fall semester, CFC added 291 members, IFC added 149 members, and NPCH added 10 members.

Signatures Events Identified for Division of Student Affairs

Elaine Jenkins, a team of dedicated DSA staff members, under the direction of Emily Holmes, director of the Office of Leadership and Student Involvement, met to select division-wide signature events.

- Potentially a current campus tradition
- Open events that appeal to the majority of the student population and have a large number of student attenders
- Within the division mission of health, connections and learning

The committee selected the following events to serve as the division-wide signature events moving forward.

- The Southern Miss Activities Council Friday Night at the Fountain,
- The Armstrong-Breach lecture series held annually during Black History Month,
- The Student Government Association in partnership with the Center for Community Engagement’s Big Event community service event.
- The Division of Student Affairs Student Awards Day

These events represent key initiatives centered around health, connections and learning.

Housing and Residence Life

Freshman Move-In Day 2019

Awards and Recognition

2019 DSA Award Winners

Joe Paul Rising Star

Marg Brown, Housing and Residence Life

Peter Darke Superstar

Emily Holmes, Office of Leadership and Sorority Life

Pillar of Student Affairs

Charlote Roberts, Campus Recreation

Fraternity and Sorority Life

Belinda Patterson, Parking and Transit Service

Regional Award Recipients

April Jordan, assistant director of marketing, received an Award of Excellence in the Southern Public Relations Federation (SPrF) Annual SPRFK Awards competition for the Glow Run 5K special event held during the spring semester.

Tucker Paschen, facilities graduate assistant, was honored with a Region II Student Public Relations Scholarship at the National Instrumental Recreational Sports Association’s (NIRSA) Regional Conference.

Kaelen Pettry, technical services manager (installed), received the ACSU New Professional Award for Region III.

Residence Hall Association (RHA)

RHA Housed House, hosted over 400 student participants on Halloween night

I love these kids. That’s why I’m here.”

Daryl Mapes, RN - Assistant Director for Clinical Services, Alvin Health Center

“It’s everybody. The team. Not just me. But thank you!”

Pan Bullard - Assistant Director for Budget and Operations, Campus Recreation
A number of students are served by a one-time consultation. Others benefit from intermittent, on-demand visits. Some are referred to SCS for treatment following a brief assessment. Having made a positive, informal first contact with a clinician is usually sufficient to mitigate any lingering barriers to accessing mental health services at SCS.

Though Let’s Talk is designed to be a short-term intervention, occasionally a student may visit more than once or twice when barriers are evident. For example, some students need more than one visit can provide, but find accessing services at SCS very uninviting. They may need multiple visits at Let’s Talk to be ready to accept a referral. However, Let’s Talk is not a substitute for regular counseling and should not be treated as such.

Through the primary mission of Let’s Talk is to reach students who do not conventionally seek mental health services, many other students come simply because of the convenience and immediacy. Let’s Talk’s consultation can often heal a crisis before it happens, facilitate a quick referral to SCS, and in many cases, prevent the unnecessary use of SCS initial assessments for students who need a simple, brief intervention.

Let’s Talk’s program at The University of Southern Mississippi is modeled on the Let’s Talk program at Cornell University. We feel gratitude to our colleagues at Cornell for the name, idea, access to their materials, and for sharing their expertise and experiences.” Southern Miss Counseling Services

New Student Center for the Office of Multicultural Programs and Services

“The office is a safe space and gives me the opportunity to develop my leadership skills by interacting with other student leaders. It has also been a great work space for organization and class work.” – Martínez Lewis

“The MPS space has been so great to have. We are reaching students who might not have before, and it has provided us the central space to share events, news and be among people who look like them. It is so good to see them engaging and really treating the space as their ‘home’.” — Tony J. Robinson, Program Manager, Office of Multicultural Programs and Services

“Thank you for providing this study space for all students! Since this office has opened, my grades have improved drastically! We appreciate you!” — Tyler McBride

The Union Plaza Renovation Project

The Student Facility, Physical Improvement Rev, endorsed by the SGA several years ago and used to fund the Joe Paul Student Theater, will soon find a major new use: the Union Plaza Project. The project was identified, in collaboration with many campus entities, including SCS, as an area of campus that would benefit from upgrades and increased student traffic, as a result. In addition, the renovations will create an upgraded game-day experience during the fall football season.

Submit Golden Nuggets!

Nuggets are simple acknowledgments of appreciation for Student Affairs employees. Large or small, that any member of the campus community may submit. Each submission will be printed and displayed in the student’s department of employment and near the Vice President for Student Affairs office suite in the student Union.

EOE/F/M/VETS/DISABILITY  UC81371  FOLLOW US.

Submit yours today using this QR code!