School of Applied Sciences Created to Promote Health and Well-being

Following approval by the State Institutions of Higher Learning Board, The University of Mississippi created a new school to house disciplines emphasizing service-scholarship, professional training, and human health sciences.

The School of Applied Sciences includes the existing departments of Communicative Disorders; Social Work; Health, Exercise Science and Recreation Management; Family and Consumer Sciences; and Court Reporting. It becomes the ninth school on the Oxford campus and 14th overall, including the five schools at The University of Mississippi Medical Center.

“We felt these departments would be better served by aligning them in a single school, so we created this brand new division to enhance the students’ education, promote recruitment and provide expanded opportunities for research and obtaining grants,” said Dr. Carolyn Ellis Staton, provost and vice chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Thomas Crowe, chair and professor of communicative disorders, is the school’s interim dean, and Dr. Linda Chitwood, chair and associate professor of health, exercise science and recreation management, is interim associate dean.

“There is a national trend to create new schools to house related, recently developed disciplines,” Crowe said. “It was decided to house these departments together because they share a common mission.”

The school enables interaction between related disciplines by combining them within a single administrative structure. The school’s mission is to enhance human society’s health and well-being by offering educational programs in child and family life, communicative sciences and disorders, dietetics and nutrition, exercise science, recreation management, health promotion, hospitality management, legal studies, merchandising, and social work.

Crowe believes students will benefit from the school’s focused mission.

“Through exposure to interdisciplinary research, funding, human service activities, and other cooperative efforts, the students stand to gain a great deal from this merger,” he said.

The School of Applied Sciences became official July 1, with all students enrolled in these departments transferred to the new school. ■
Letter from the Dean

Dear Alumni and Friends,

This year marks a landmark event at The University of Mississippi: creation of the School of Applied Sciences, the first new school to be established on the Oxford campus since 1979. We in the departments that make up the school—faculty, staff, students, and alumni—are excited to share in this historic event.

The primary mission of our new school is to enhance human society’s health and well-being by offering educational programs in child and family life, communicative sciences and disorders, dietetics and nutrition, exercise science, health promotion, hospitality management, legal studies, park and recreation management, merchandising, and social work (see story on Page 1). That mission is supported by our departments’ commitment to engage in basic and applied research and to provide professional services to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Our school’s five departments hold national accreditation, and the departments of Communicative Disorders and Health, Exercise Science, and Recreation Management have graduate programs. Approximately 750 undergraduate majors and 87 graduate students are enrolled in the school.

We have exciting plans for our school’s growth over the next several years. These plans include creating new academic departments, developing department-based and schoolwide research initiatives and centers, and forming a fiscal base to ensure our departments’ growth and excellence.

To help achieve these goals, The University of Mississippi Alumni Association is working with us to establish the Applied Sciences Alumni Chapter. We hope you will participate in this chapter and join us in the development of our new school.

Sincerely,

Thomas A. Crowe
Interim Dean

Applied Sciences Order Established

The Applied Sciences Order was established by The University of Mississippi Alumni Association and The University of Mississippi Foundation to benefit the newly formed School of Applied Sciences.

Membership is available to those willing to make a financial commitment to ensure the school’s continued success. A graduate of the school, a friend, an organization, a family, or other group may become an order member.

To recognize the generosity of order members, their names will be displayed in a Gallery of Distinction in the George Street House, which houses the School of Applied Sciences administrative offices. In addition, members will receive annual giving credit in the University’s Annual Fund program, and may participate in the order’s annual meeting and be involved in its fiscal decisions.

A minimum gift of $5,000, payable either in a lump sum or in installments over a period of not more than 10 years, satisfies the requirements for membership.

The newest members of the Applied Sciences Order are some of the University’s most prominent faculty. Dr. Gloria Kellum, vice chancellor for University relations and professor of communicative disorders, became the first official member of the order. Dr. Thomas Crowe and Dr. Linda Chitwood also realized the importance of this program and were among the first to invest in the School of Applied Sciences.

Join the Applied Sciences Order soon and help provide Mississippi’s School of Applied Sciences with the private support needed to ensure the progress of its programs. For more information on joining the order, call or e-mail Sheila Dossett at (662) 915-7375, sdossett@olemiss.edu, or return the form below.

I would like more information on the Applied Sciences Order.

Name ____________________________
Address ____________________________
Phone Numbers (Home) ____________________________ (Work) ____________________________
E-mail ____________________________ Fax ____________________________

Return to Sheila W. Dossett, Department of Alumni Affairs, P.O. Box 1848, University, MS 38677-1848.
Audiologists Hope to Help Young Children Learn Better by Raising the Volume of their Teachers’ Voices

Put 15 or 20 children into a room together, and things are sure to get pretty noisy. But a group of researchers in the School of Applied Sciences hopes to boost academic performance in elementary school classrooms by turning the volume up a notch.

The project, a joint study by audiologists and speech-language pathologists in the Center for Speech and Hearing Research, is aimed at helping pupils hear the teacher clearly, improving concentration and learning.

The researchers have fitted kindergarten and first-grade teachers at Oxford’s Bramlett Elementary School with wireless headset microphones. The teachers speak in a normal tone, and their voices are amplified through loudspeakers on each wall, making them clearly audible throughout the room.

"It seems that the younger the child is, the louder he or she needs the sound to be in order to be able to pay attention," said Dr. Julie Walton, a communicative disorders professor studying how the system affects language development and comprehension. "Just making the teacher’s voice a little bit louder makes it easier for the children to learn."

Young children need sounds to be about 15 decibels louder than adults do to maintain concentration and comprehension, she said.

"A child is distractible, a child has a short attention span, a child does not have a sophisticated command of the language, so he or she can fill in the gaps on what he or she misses," Walton said. "Also, children are more prone to upper respiratory infections, which can mean intermittent hearing loss."

The system also may help children localize sounds and understand speech better in the presence of other noise, said Dr. Richard Roberts, one of Walton’s collaborators on the project.

"If I am listening to you speak in a background of noise from air conditioning, a radio, and even from other people talking, I am able to separate that stream of your speech and assign it as coming from you while the other noises are coming from their respective sources," Roberts said.

Three kindergarten classrooms used the amplification system throughout the 2000-01 school year, and three more classrooms served as controls. This fall, children in the amplified kindergarten classrooms went to first-grade classrooms fitted with the same equipment.

When the teacher’s microphone is switched on, his or her voice seems to come from all directions and is the same volume at the back of the room as it is at the front. Shannon Robbins, one of the teachers using the system, said her pupils quickly became accustomed to the system.

"The children love it," Robbins said. "They call it my Britney Spears look. There have been times when we’ve come back to the classroom from recess or some other activity and I forgot to turn my microphone on. The children point it out to me right away because they miss it when it’s not on."

Last fall, Walton and audiologists Roberts and Dr. Lisa Luckes Mendel evaluated each of the children. They collected data on pre-reading skills and conducted sophisticated auditory tests to see how the children process auditory information and localize sounds. The tests will be repeated next spring to gauge the system’s effectiveness.

Although results won’t be in for another year, researchers are optimistic the system will prove to be an easy, affordable way to improve overall academic achievement, even in higher grade levels. By improving reading skills, the systems may help students learn better in history, science, and even mathematics classes.

"Every child will benefit because even very smart children who have had the benefit of really good preschool environments still have trouble paying attention," Walton said. "The children who will really benefit, though, are the ones who may be at risk for a variety of reasons and need a little additional help in the classroom."

Shannon Robbins uses a wireless microphone while teaching her kindergarten class at Bramlett Elementary School in Oxford.
The Department of Court Reporting is excited about its administrative move into the new School of Applied Sciences. Physically, it is still located in the Lamar Law Center.

Since the creation of the Court Reporting Program in 1976, approximately 200 graduates have received the high-level academic and skills preparation to launch their court, conference, deposition, and/or captioning careers.

The curriculum has evolved over the years to meet the demands of the court reporting profession. An emerging career option is captioning reporting. UM graduates can enter this exciting field in broadcast captioning or as CART (Communications Access Realtime Translation) providers. The need for broadcast captioning reporters is increasing with enactment of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, which requires captioning of all broadcasts in the top 25 television markets by 2006. Connie Lambert Templin (BCR ’90), for example, is a broadcast captioner with the National Captioning Institute in the Washington, D.C., area. Also, CART providers allow hearing-impaired students to participate in mainstream education as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at secondary, college, and university levels.

Chair Janice K. Bounds and Assistant Professor Lorri C. Williamson teach all court reporting courses. Both have attained the NCRA certification of Certified Reporting Instructor (CRI) and are members of the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) and the Mississippi Court Reporters Association (MCRA). In July 2000, Bounds received the Outstanding Educator Award at NCRA’s National Convention in San Diego.

“I’m very honored and flattered to have been chosen to receive this prestigious award,” she said. “I think it reflects not only on me as an individual but also on the excellent court reporting program here at the University.”

With the help of NCRA, Congress in 2000 was asked to appropriate funds to recruit and train individuals in performing realtime captioning services to meet FCC regulations. With the strong support of Mississippi’s congressional delegation, UM’s Court Reporting Program was selected to receive $500,000 through the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration to train reporters and students to become broadcast captioners. Implementation of the pilot/demonstration program will begin when the labor department disburses the funds, and curriculum changes will be made to meet the goals of this exciting and challenging opportunity.
Growing. Changing. Thriving. No matter what adjective you choose to describe Family and Consumer Sciences, it’s a department on the move.

Family and consumer sciences majors numbered 136 in 1996. Today, almost 300 majors eagerly anticipate the wide variety of career options in four areas of emphasis—child/family life, dietetics/nutrition, hospitality management, and fashion merchandising.

“Students recognize quality in the programs we offer,” said Dr. Erskine R. Smith, chair and associate professor, pointing to the department’s accreditation by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Progressive academic programs also must embrace change when needed.

“What we have done is transform the curricula, reducing core courses and dramatically increasing specialized courses,” Smith said. “It’s as though we are offering four bachelor’s degrees, rather than one with four areas of emphasis.”

The growth in the department has come as a result of “word-of-mouth advertising,” said Smith. “Our students tell other students this is a strong program.”

Yet another key in the department’s growth is the faculty.

“Our faculty members also are known for being caring advisers and teachers who prepare, support, guide, and encourage students on their journeys to successful careers,” Smith said.

Recent Graduate Heads Up Food Service at Large Center

Just a few years into her career, Amy Murphy of Oxford finds herself directing a staff of 25 that prepares 1,200 meals a day—1,200 special meals.

A 1998 graduate, 28-year-old Murphy is director of nutrition services at the North Mississippi Regional Center (NMRC) for persons with developmental disabilities. Registered dietitians serve on the center’s interdisciplinary teams charged with evaluating and caring for 430 campus and community clients, and meals are adapted to clients’ needs.

“It’s an extraordinary environment, and the clients are a very special group of people,” said Murphy, who assumed her new post in July after serving as one of NMRC’s registered dietitians.

Murphy and her staff, including two clinical dietitians who are also Ole Miss grads, follow a four-week meal rotation and plan many “extras” to help clients celebrate holidays.
Health, Exercise Science, and Recreation Management

New Name Reflects Department’s Mission

The Department of Exercise Science and Leisure Management has a new name more accurately reflecting its mission and programs—the Department of Health, Exercise Science, and Recreation Management.

Exercise Science Division
Exercise Science has experienced extensive growth and development. Its undergraduate program ensures students are prepared for professions in fitness- and health-related industries and fields, while the master's program facilitates research and professional training. The Ph.D. program ensures students have the expertise to offer institutions of higher learning and places 100 percent of graduates.

The division’s students and faculty conduct research about the benefits of exercise. In the Applied Physiology Laboratory, they examine aerobic fitness as a means of balancing hormones released in response to psychological stress. The balance has connections to obesity, diabetes, immune system suppression, and psychological depression.

In the Biomechanics Laboratory, factors that impact landing in response to a jump or a step are examined, providing insight into mechanisms responsible for balance and what to do to enhance coordination and diminish the likelihood of falling.

Health Promotion Division
With the proliferation of employee health promotion programs, opportunities for health promotion specialists abound. Ole Miss meets this need through the Graduate Health Promotion Program coordinated by Dr. Jeffrey Hallam.

"The health needs of the United States and the world are changing, and our program prepares our students to lead the way in health promotion and disease prevention," Hallum said.

Focusing on graduate-level competencies set by national health organizations, the program enables students to apply their knowledge and skills through UM's HealthWorks employee program and the Center for Health Promotion, which Hallam directs.

Park and Recreation Division
Many changes have occurred since Dr. Don Cheek originated the Bachelor of Recreation program in 1974.

The division's new title, Park and Recreation Management, identifies professionally with the National Recreation and Park Association. In October 2000, the UM undergraduate degree program was accredited by the NRPA.

A cooperative education program recently instituted with Mississippi community colleges and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers enables academically eligible forest technology majors choosing the Park and Recreation Management Program to complete their final two years of college with on-the-job training at Sardis, Arkabutla, or Enid lakes.

The Park and Recreation Management Advisory Board will, under the leadership of Harvey Faust '76, unveil a long-anticipated Student Endowment fund drive. The goal for January 2003 is to offer an annual $500 academic scholarship to an undergraduate or graduate student major.
Whether working for social justice, the elderly, terminally or mentally ill, and victims of human and natural disasters, students in the Department of Social Work at Ole Miss continually amaze faculty by their initiative and energy.

Such was the case when students in last year’s Welfare Policy Class joined those in the UM law school’s Poverty Law Class to improve services and better protect vulnerable adults in Mississippi.

Students in the classes began the project as a class assignment, but as they became aware of the needs of this population, the effort grew, resulting in Mississippi’s new, stiffer legislation protecting vulnerable adults from exploitation, abuse, and neglect.

“I very much appreciate the excellent work undertaken by these University students to help me and my legislative colleagues develop into law a bill that is making a difference in the lives of those citizens who truly need our protection,” said Lieutenant Governor Amy Tuck, who sees the bill’s passage as the fulfillment of a promise from the statewide campaign of 1999.

Social work students got Representative Jay Eads and Senator Gray Tollison of Oxford to introduce the bill to the House and Senate. They also organized a meeting in Jackson attended by 60 people from across the state. The bill passed both houses and was signed into law by Governor Ronnie Musgrove in spring 2001.

Responding to the September 11 terrorist attacks, the students quickly helped organize the Lafayette-Oxford-University 9-11 Education Series. The weekly education forums are providing information about the Islam religion, Middle Eastern cultures and politics, and counter-terrorism measures to help people deal with the tragedy’s aftermath of fear, anger, and stress.

Social work students are putting into practice the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom to educate and improve the quality of life of people in many diverse situations.

The students organized the first annual International Social Work Conference attended by community social workers and social work students and faculty from seven Mississippi universities and colleges.

“Social work students have won the respect of professional social workers across the state with the abilities displayed while organizing and conducting the conference,” said Kimberly Shackelford, assistant professor of social work.

The students raised money for several projects last year, including the Domestic Violence Shelter and victims of the India earthquake and Pontotoc tornado.

Just for fun, the students sponsored a daylong carnival at North Mississippi Regional Center, providing the residents with games, face painting, and prizes.

Members of the Student Social Work Organization volunteer at least 20 hours a semester beyond academic requirements, serving as mentors and tutors, delivering meals-on-wheels, and helping where needed at Head Start centers, veteran’s and nursing homes, schools, and youth, family crisis, and children’s services centers.
Join the New Online Career Alumni Network

If you are willing to connect with Ole Miss students and graduates to help ensure their future career success, we have a spot for you! The University of Mississippi Career Center, in partnership with the Office of Alumni Affairs, is pleased to introduce to you the new online Career Alumni Network (CAN).

Here's how it works:
• Go to the link: http://career.olemiss.edu/CAN
• Complete basic information about your educational and career background.
  Your password-protected information is made available to Ole Miss students and alumni who search the site for career advice.
  Students connect with CAN volunteers to get information about their career fields and geographic locations.

To find out what's happening in the School of Applied Sciences, visit our Web site at www.olemiss.edu/depts/applied_sciences

An Ole Miss student will soon call to talk about the School of Applied Sciences and seek your support.
Talk to you soon!

The University of Mississippi
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Alumni Association
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