

Building Opportunity in Mississippi through Higher Education

A Report from the Steering Committee for the Mississippi Leadership Summit on Higher Education

Goal

Summit identifies what all of higher education – public and private, two-year and four-year institutions - can do to advance the competitiveness of our state and to improve the quality of life of our people – a public agenda.

Accomplish through partnerships with schools, business and state government

What is our Public Agenda?

- A list of top priorities for all of our colleges and universities
- One that will:
 - Help build a robust economy
 - Educate a strong workforce
 - Improve our schools
 - Enrich the lives of our children, students and families

Affirmations

- Education in Mississippi is the key to success in a competitive global economy
- Mississippi's diversity can be its strength
- All Mississippians can benefit from greater economic opportunity
- Higher education must take a leadership role in education's seamless continuum

Challenges

- Students experience schools, colleges and universities as separate islands
- Schools, colleges and universities fail to meet needs of *all* Mississippians
- Fear of change or lack of motivation for education or a better job can hinder individuals' progress
- Not all people feel connected in the state too many are poor, ill housed or underemployed

Benefits of Achieving our Goals

Creating higher expectations at all educational levels

Improving educational attainment by all Mississippians would improve the economic situation for the entire state Through this package of priorities and initiatives, our intention is to provide a shared framework for educational, economic and social progress. Priority 1: All of Mississippi will understand and embrace the value of education.

Build public awareness via a broad public campaign that underscores the importance of high school completion, advanced education and adult lifelong learning

Priority 2: All of Mississippi's children will start school ready to learn

- Expand and improve pre-kindergarten programs for children in all areas of the state
- Develop partnerships, use student volunteers and seek private support to devise an affordable Mississippi solution

Priority 3: Mississippi will substantially boost the quality of teaching and learning in elementary and secondary schools.

- Enhance school partnerships
- Develop a school-based strategic research plan
- Boost advanced placement course offerings throughout the state
- Educate more and better teachers and school administrators – and work to retain them

Priority 4: Mississippi will increase high school graduation rates and college participation and graduation rates at all colleges and universities.

- Promote the college prep curriculum
- Raise participation and graduation rates in twoyear and four-year colleges and universities
- Raise the number of college graduates in critical career fields such as science, math, computer science and engineering

Priority 5: Mississippi will increase participation in adult lifelong learning, worker training and professional development activities.

- Increase part-time enrollment and access to adult education
- Develop career and education pathway programs in high schools and community colleges
- Encourage employers to offer employer-paid tuition benefits
- Conduct a study of the state's human resource needs

Priority 6: Mississippi will increase its support for university-based R&D and the higher education community will redouble its efforts to address economic needs.

- Continue to increase state's scientific, technical and research capacity
- Develop proactive partnerships with business and industry
- Consider matching private research investments with state monies

Sustaining a Public Agenda

The state should consider establishing an education coordinating entity to better align policies and practices across educational sectors

To annually assess educational progress at all levels, the state should consider creating a Mississippi Education Progress Board

Building Opportunity in Mississippi through Higher Education