

Education School to Begin School Principal Training Program in June

Contributed by Tobie Baker
01/22/2009

OXFORD, Miss. - With a shortage of school principals statewide, the University of Mississippi is embarking on a new effort to train future school administrators.

Starting in June, the UM School of Education plans to offer the Mississippi Principal Corps, an innovative, state-of-the-art principal preparation program. The 13-month, 36-credit hour program is slated to accept 10 to 12 candidates in its inaugural class. The training includes a full-time internship to help candidates grasp a better understanding of the daily roles and responsibilities of a school principal in today's environment.

We will pair our candidates with successful proven principals at various public schools across the state," said Susan McClelland, program director. "This hands-on training is what makes this such a unique graduate program."

Completion of the program results in either a master's or a specialist's degree in educational leadership. Designed for entry-level administrators, the program awards its graduates with initial licensure from the Mississippi Department of Education, and graduates receive a \$10,000 signing bonus when they agree to work as a building level administrator in a Mississippi school.

Applicants for the program must have a current teacher's license, three years of teaching experience, a competitive GRE score, a minimum 3.0 grade-point level, leadership experience and a recommendation from their local superintendent. Available online, applications are due March 2. To learn more or to apply, visit <http://www.olemiss.edu/principalcorps>.

Funding for the Mississippi Principal Corps is made possible by a gift from Jim Barksdale, former president and CEO of Netscape Communications Corp., and his wife, Donna. The funds provide participants with a full scholarship, which covers the cost of tuition and books, as well as an allowance for summer living expenses.

The program appears to be hitting home as five public school districts have committed their support. The DeSoto and Lee county, and Oxford, Tupelo and Pass Christian school districts plan to award their teachers a full stipend if accepted into the program.

With approximately 1,500 students in the Pass Christian school system, Superintendent Sue Matheson said having a quality trained principal who understands educational issues is key.

"With increased accountability placed on schools, we always have a need for good principals," Matheson said. "A principal has to wear some big shoes, and I know Ole Miss always runs a first-class operation."

"Here at Ole Miss, we are committed to every school and child across Mississippi," said Tom Burnham, education dean. "We look forward to continue having a direct impact statewide as we seek to improve the quality of our principals."

For more information, call 662-915-7063.

