

# High school students learn hometown problem solving through UM program

**Press Release**  
**University of Mississippi**  
Rising high school sophomores and juniors from across the state are looking for innovative ways to tackle social and economic problems in their hometowns after taking part in an annual University of Mississippi summer entrepreneurial leadership program.

The third annual McLean Entrepreneurial Leadership Program, or MELP, was a week long experience for 15 students entering their sophomore and junior years. Presented by innovation fellows and scholars of the CEED Initiative at the McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement, the program took place in July on the Oxford campus.

Students from Clarksdale, Greenville, Marks, Lexington, New Albany, Newton, Sallis and Sardis all participated in the program this year. This included students from M Partner communities of Lexington and New Albany, where the university is piloting community engagement initiatives.

M Partner, a campuswide initiative that seeks to align university resources with community-driven projects to enhance quality of life in partner communities, also includes programs in Charleston.

“The goal of the MELP program was to introduce students from around the state to the entrepreneurial spirit of community and economic development,” said Elena Bauer, a law student and a CEED innovation fellow.

MELP students interacted with community leaders throughout Oxford and Lafayette County, and also attended readings and lectures

by professors, community leaders and students.

“This leadership program was initiated to stimulate an entrepreneurial mindset that can be utilized to solve community and state problems through community engagement,” said Albert Nylander, director of the McLean Institute and professor of sociology.

The program is structured to cultivate innovative approaches to solving problems that students identified in their communities. Throughout the week, participants studied principles of entrepreneurship, data and demographics, environmental sustainability, and health and wellness.

This year included the addition of virtual reality technology that is being utilized to stimulate workforce skills in the high-tech industry of virtual and augmented reality.

“The impact from this weeklong program is being felt in communities across Mississippi,” said J.R. Love, CEED project manager. “Business and community leaders are seeing their local high school students develop action-oriented solutions for their own community.”

When asked about the experience of MELP, one student responded with, “These experiences will allow me to keep an even more open mind. I am also now more motivated to make change in my community.”

The goal of MELP and M Partner is to bring about this type of inspired and innovative thinking, said Laura Martin, associate director of the McLean Institute and director of M Partner.

“Thanks to our CEED students, program partners

and the talented students who join us for MELP, we are able to learn from one another and join forces to address pressing social and economic problems in Mississippi,” Martin said. “I am optimistic that we can expand this program in the future and develop a network of partnerships across the state that will impact quality of life in Mississippi.”

Besides support from the Office of Pre-College Programs, other MELP partners include the university’s Center for Population Studies, School of Law, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College and Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and Lobaki Inc. The Robert M. Hearin Foundation and UM alumnus Bill Fry also provided financial support to fund the CEED initiative and youth leadership and technology programs.

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The third annual McLean Entrepreneurial Leadership Program was a weeklong experience for 15 students entering their sophomore and junior years in high school. Participants included (top row) Jamien Rashaad, Devin McCray; (next row) Dawn Boddie, Alaysia Harrington, Jessica Clarke, Elena Bauer; (next row) Cheyenne Bailey, Maggie Jo Everett, Kourtney Gressett, Aeronney Berry; (next row) Zipporah Chapman, Taylor Edwards, Jodi Parks, Alaysia Harrington; (bottom row) James Horatio, Jasmine Windom, Mya Calhoun, Cherkyianah Gibbs and Brady Ruffin.

(Submitted photo)

## NOTICE TO VOTERS IN BEAT 2 SUB-DURANT AND BEAT 5 LEXINGTON POLLING PLACE CHANGE

**BEAT 2 SUB-DURANT, VOTERS PRESENTLY VOTE AT THE NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY IN DURANT and you will no longer vote at the National Guard Armory effective immediately. This polling place no longer meets statutory federal and state guidelines. Therefore, your polling place has been changed to Williams Sullivan Elementary School/Band Hall, 14494 Hwy. 51 South, Durant, MS 39063.**

**BEAT 5 LEXINGTON VOTERS PRESENTLY VOTE AT THE LEXINGTON ELEMENTARY GYM IN LEXINGTON and will no longer vote at the Lexington Elementary Gym effective immediately. This polling place no longer meets statutory federal and state guidelines. Therefore, your polling place has been changed to Lexington Library in Lexington at 208 Tchula Street.**

**On November 6, 2018, you will vote at the Lexington Library if you are registered in Beat 5 Lexington and at the Williams Sullivan Elementary School/Band Hall if you are a registered voter in Beat 2 Sub-Durant for any and all future elections.**

**If questions, please contact the Circuit Clerk’s Office @ 834-2476.**

**SUBMITTED BY:  
EARLINE WRIGHT-HART  
CIRCUIT CLERK**

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