

Mississippi College welcomes a new decade in 2020

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Mississippi College leaders embrace a new decade with plans to attract another generation of outstanding students as it builds on its reputation for academic excellence. Plans are also underway to strengthen international and honors programs, introduce new campus leaders, host numerous campus events that signal the institution's commitment to the cause of Christ and continue work to enhance the historic Clinton campus.

MC is a stellar academic institution in so many ways in the midst of the Christian university's 194th academic year. *The Wall Street Journal* recently rated Mississippi College as the best private university in Mississippi.

New academic programs such as the master's degree for nursing and the accreditation of the institution's bachelor's program in electrical engineering all point to a growing academic profile. Recently announced, Mississippi College forged a new partnership with all branches of the U.S. military to enhance access to MC academic programs through reduced tuition for men and women in uniform. MC will also host training drills for military personnel on campus during weekends.

Also playing a major role on the academic side, the Edward McMillan Center for Education Abroad will be enhanced, thanks to an initial \$2 mil-



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lion fund drive. Beth Stapleton provides solid leadership as the Center's first executive director. MC's Honors College began with its first fourteen freshmen last fall, and now director Erin Norcross seeks to recruit another class of superb student scholars.

The new year brings new faces to the Mississippi College community. One is Laura Dilmore Jackson, who begins work in the new year as the university's chief financial officer. Jackson brings more than three decades of state government service. The MC graduate most recently served Gov. Phil Bryant as the executive director of the Department of Finance and Administration. During 2019 Homecoming festivities, she was also named as the MC School of Business Alumnae of the Year.

A Clintonian, Jackson will succeed retired CFO Donna Lewis, who provid-

ed outstanding service to MC the past thirteen years. The first chair of the university's newly created English and Philosophy Department is longtime Mississippi College professor John Meadors. The Clinton resident began his duties in January. MC's English Department recently merged with the philosophy program. As 2019 rolls into 2020, Debbie Norris will continue serving her alma mater as the university's interim provost.

Mississippi College's new year will always be driven by major events. That includes the 2020 Homecoming with a Choctaws football game, parade, reunions, road race, and tailgating October 24.

The list is lengthy, but some of the notable dates include the 2020 Career Day on February 25. The event in Anderson Hall will bring more than eighty

employers networking with hundreds of job-seeking students.

The School of Business hosts its Faith and Ethics series to bring extraordinary business leaders to campus to discuss how they utilized Christian principles to succeed.

The 2020 Spring Scholarship Dinner will attract another prominent speaker - an announcement is expected soon. In 2019, future NFL Hall of Famer Drew Brees headlined the MC signature event. The New Orleans Saints star quarterback spoke of his faith, family and football before more than 700 guests packing Anderson Hall. The MC dinner has generated more than \$4 million in scholarships since 2008.

The university is blessed with a strong presence of the Baptist Student Union, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and other faith-building organizations. In the spring, BSU undergraduates will take spring mission trips around the world to spread the Gospel.

Finally, renovations of Alumni Hall starting this winter will open the door for a new Chick-fil-A restaurant on the Clinton campus by the summer of 2020. The popular restaurant chain known for its customer service and commitment to Christian business principles will be a perfect fit for MC's values. Many MC students and employees have been both customers and employees at Chick-fil-A restaurants across the U.S.

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