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To be a Mississippi State Bulldog means to be more than just a student. It means to respect others, to be a leader, to be involved, and many other dignified traits. There are few members of the student body who can embody these values every day without wavering. A special distinction is reserved for those who serve as role models on our campus: the Spirit of State Award.

Twenty-nine Mississippi State University students received the Spirit of State Award at this year’s 17th annual ceremony. Since 2005, the award has been given to both undergraduate and graduate students who exemplify the ideal MSU student and display the most honorable University values. “Integrity, hard work, and respect for others,” said University President Dr. Mark Keenum at the ceremony when describing the principles of which Spirit of State recipients live their lives by. A recipient of the award not only works hard to uphold these values in the classroom, but also strives to live their day-to-day life in a way that demonstrates what it means to be a Bulldog. President Keenum told this year’s recipients that they “... truly are the best of the best.”

Additionally, several Alumni who had previously received the Spirit of State Award were invited and attended the ceremony to congratulate this year’s winners as well as provide a vision for what the future holds for award recipients.

The group of recipients for the 2022 Spirit of State Awards contains students from various cities, backgrounds, and disciplines. While each recipient is uniquely involved in multiple campus organizations, they all shared the same passion for being a student at MSU. The following list contains the names and majors of the 2022 Spirit of State Award recipients: Hannah Blankenship, Communication & Spanish; Kamira Carter, Marketing & Supply Chain Logistics; Maggie Cayson, Biochemistry; Chanu Cherukuri, Biological Engineering; Kailey Clinton, Biomedical Engineering; Tanner DeYoung, Biochemistry; Tyler Dickerson, Economics & Spanish; Sarah Grace Dulaney, Microbiology; Nautica Edwards, Kinesiology; Ian Evans, Veterinary Medicine; Araceli Marie Figueroa, Chemistry; Yuliya Gluhova, Anthropology; Morgan Gray, History; Catherine Hoffer, Elementary Education; Ryan Jarratt, Political Science; Harry Jones, Biochemistry; Janarah Jones; Biochemistry; Hope Lee, Communication; Erin Matthews, Biochemistry & Pre-Medicine; Caleb Scott McCreary, Biomedical Engineering; Peter McGinn, Veterinary Medicine; Ann Olivia Radicioni, Political Science; Christopher Blake Robinson, Biomedical Engineering; Annie Sieja, Mechanical Engineering; Garrett Smith, Political Science; Jordan Smith, Communication; Amoni Glenna Washington, Food Science, Nutrition, Health Promotion; Kayla Williams, Biological Sciences.

The ceremony, hosted by Student Affairs, took place in April of 2022 in the Old Main Academic Center Auditorium on the Starkville campus.
“Calvin is a current student worker within University Recreation majoring in Kinesiology with a concentration in Clinical Exercise Physiology. He enjoys building things with his hands, running, working out, being outside, cooking for others, and seeking opportunities to plug into the community. To only be a sophomore, Calvin has shown maturity well beyond his years as an ambitious self-starter for the department and its fitness program. Within a year, Calvin moved up the ranks from Fitness Assistant to Lead Trainer and now serves in our highest student worker role as a Program Assistant. His main responsibilities are finding strategies to hold staff accountable and putting together effective special events and programs for the area of fitness. Since obtaining the Program Assistant position in August, Calvin initiated the process of reworking the fitness floor cleaning maps along with developing other solutions to better floor operations. From the special event and program side, Calvin has partnered with the Center for America’s Veterans in coordinating the MSU Veterans Annual 5K/10K & fun run which will take place in partnership with University Recreation’s 13th Annual Strength and Fitness Week.”

Nomination by Jason Townsend, Assistant Director of University Recreation and Meridith Nuckolls, Fitness Coordinator
R.A.D. PROGRAM

Rape Aggression Defense (R.A.D.) is a self-defense program that provides its participants with practical techniques to defend themselves in potentially dangerous situations. While the program has strictly offered classes for women in the past, this year marks the first where the course was offered for both women and men. Participants are taught both hand-to-hand physical defense techniques and verbal techniques.

R.A.D. also offers scenario-based training upon the completion of the initial 3 sessions, where participants are placed in simulated situations that allow them to practice their acquired skills in a real-world scenario. There are typically 3 classes offered a semester, each class contains 3 sessions of instruction and practice, with an optional 4th scenario-based session available.

This course is free of charge. Students who are interested in attending are encouraged to visit police.msstate.edu/divisions/prevention for more information and to sign-up. More information is also available through Cpl. Chantel Solis-McCoy at cs1423@saffairs.msstate.edu or (662) 325.9149.

FOOD FREEDOM

Food Freedom is a support group that was developed by Student Counseling Services to provide support and advice to students who struggle with disordered eating behaviors. The program began in the fall of 2021 and addresses topics covering stress-related eating behaviors, eating meals regularly, food-associated guilt, and enjoying foods in moderation.

Meetings have been held bi-weekly at Barnes and Noble to provide a neutral and safe location where students feel comfortable attending. Students seeking more information on Food Freedom can contact Claire Griese, P-LPC at cgriese@saffairs.msstate.edu.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

Supporting Students in Distress is a training program that equips faculty and staff with information on the signs to look for in students when identifying mental health needs or other needs such as food insecurity, financial issues, and family issues. With the increase in awareness of the importance of mental health, this training offered a chance for faculty and staff to learn techniques and resources that they may have not been aware of before.

These courses provide attendees with potential signs of distress, emphasize active listening, increase knowledge of campus resources, discuss where to direct students in need of assistance, and encourage staff and faculty to practice self-care and set personal boundaries.

COVID-19 VACCINES

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Longest Student Health Center instituted vaccine clinics to increase vaccination rates in the MSU community. The clinics began soon after the vaccine was released to the public.

The Health Center offered both the Pfizer and Johnson and Johnson vaccines. During the height of the pandemic, clinics were held two times a week to meet the demand for vaccinations, but during the Spring of 2022, vaccine clinics were generally held on Friday mornings. The Health Center has also placed a priority on being flexible and catering to the needs of people on campus by having clinics inside the Colvard Student Union Dawg House. These clinics have been a huge success in increasing vaccination rates among students, faculty, and staff, and the flexibility and accessibility the Longest Student Health Center provides have aided in efforts to keep campus safe.
You might be familiar with Barnes & Noble at Mississippi State University, but renovations have revamped the store experience for students and community members. The renovation, finished in August 2020, has brought new areas to study within the retail space, an event space that seats 30, and a redesigned café.

Chelsea Cockburn, general manager for Barnes & Noble at MSU, describes the new event space as a place to foster creative thinking, mentioning that her favorite part is the full wall of whiteboard space. "Our goal was to provide an area for creativity and gathering together," Cockburn said. "It's a great place for students to do anything from writing their entire English paper to designing a group project in a comfortable setting."

The new spaces have led to many opportunities such as professional development, business meetings, student organizations, book clubs, and study groups. "We want our students to feel like Barnes & Noble is an escape from the hustle and bustle of college life," Cockburn said.

One of the most popular events hosted in Barnes & Noble are trivia nights with MSU Student Association, which Chrissy Hoof, Director of Programming for MSU's Student Association, says is a favorite among students and staff.

"When hosting Student Association Trivia Nights," said Hoof, a junior majoring in interior design, "the space definitely helped enhance our experience. Through the generosity of Barnes & Noble, we were able to take our trivia nights to the next level."

Barnes & Noble has also become a learning location, with a visual marketing class using the new event space as their lab. In this class, students can learn in the event space upstairs and then are allowed to go into the store and apply concepts to a real-life retail space.

"I'm so proud that our store offers an opportunity for students to connect with each other, professionals, and MSU faculty and staff," said Cockburn. "I hope to see our spaces grow and flourish. I want to see students stop by for an hour, pop in and say hi, or book our space for an event. I love that Barnes & Noble at Mississippi State now provides a space for students to grow in their knowledge."

Anyone can reserve the event space at no charge, including many of the amenities Barnes & Noble has to offer. To reserve the event space, email ccockburn@bncollege.com; however, many areas within Barnes & Noble can be used without reservations.
The Department of Health Promotion and Wellness welcomed Santee Ezell as its new director in the fall of 2021. Ezell, who has been with MSU for over 4 years, developed a passion for working to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and drug addiction before her time as director of HPW. She loves to see the impact of the work Health Promotion and Wellness has on campus has on the student population. “We reach so many students through partnerships and collaborative projects and it is always a bonus to see someone new that we haven’t seen at a previous tabling, presentation, or program,” Ezell said. In the future, she seeks to continue to promote a culture of well-being, and she also wants to continue to reach marginalized students to enhance diversity and inclusion within the department. “For me, I always say when you teach one, you save one. I think we have had the opportunity to pour into students and I really enjoy that,” said Ezell.

Dr. Yvett Roby has been the Director of the Office of Survivor Support since the department’s inception in the summer of 2020. Prior to her time as director, Dr. Roby worked in Student Counseling Services which provided her with extensive experience in assisting students with improving their mental health. She also serves as an advocate for survivors of assault, motivated by seeing the effects it has on mental health and the college experience.

When asked about her favorite aspect of her job, Dr. Roby stated, “The ability to empower students to continue to thrive at their highest potential even after encountering a tragedy.” As the Office of Survivor Support continues to grow under her leadership, the department’s goals remain clear. “Our mission is to lead efforts to address inequality and empower students who have been victimized and help those students transition from victim to survivor by offering supportive measures,” Dr. Roby said.
KATIE CORBAN
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Katie Corban began working with the Division of Student Affairs in 2016 as the Marketing and Communications Manager. Over the last several years, Corban has continued to show a need for furthering marketing and communication efforts within the division and among outside campus partners.

She continuously strives to find innovative ways to stay ahead of trending information and communication efforts. One way of doing this is through the student team that she has cultivated – consisting of graduate assistants, student graphic designers, student videographers, and student photographers. With a team now totaling 8 positions these students are able to gain real world experience by completing jobs for various units on campus.

Other projects from Corban’s office include: The Positive Sip podcast, campus digital signage system, and this magazine.
This academic year treated MSU students and the general public to a unique and vibrant live music festival experience both semesters. After COVID-19 put gaps in the annual continuation of MSU’s Bulldog Bash in the fall and Old Main Music Festival in the spring, it came as no surprise that students were eager to get out and participate in the lively festivities that bring the community together and carry on MSU traditions.

Bulldog Bash is an annual music festival that takes place in the fall semester. Since 2000, the festival has been steadily growing, and is now the largest free outdoor concert in the state of Mississippi. Not only does Bulldog Bash have every other free outdoor festival beat for attendance size, but has managed to beat its own past record. According to Liv Hunter, Student Director of Bulldog Bash, last November’s Bash was the largest ever, hosting an estimated 35,000 attendees. In fact, the climbing attendance size is what has caused Bulldog Bash to recently move from its historic location in the Cotton District to downtown Starkville, where there is more room.

While Bulldog Bash 2021 took place in November, MSU Student Association’s Bulldog Bash Committee worked hard for months to lock in country music star Hardy as the headliner.

Hardy, whose real name is Michael
Wilson Hardy, a multi-platinum country singer-songwriter from Philadelphia, MS. However, Hardy was not the only one to perform in front of thousands of Mississippi State students. Several acts opened for Hardy including DJ Will Tha Thrill, Joshy Soul, and lastly Four Way Stop, winner of Music Maker Production's “Battle of The Bands” that took place earlier in the semester. In addition to the main stage, musicians from around the community performed on the local stage. Another popular part of Bulldog Bash was the art market, where local businesses were able to thrive off of the heavy foot traffic provided by the nationally recognized music acts.

Students who enjoyed the exuberance of last year’s 21st Annual Bulldog Bash also got the opportunity to enjoy a second free, outdoor music festival at MSU: Old Main Music Festival. Old Main Music Festival was held in April 2022 at the Mississippi State University Amphitheater just across the street from the Junction at Davis-Wade Stadium. The all-day festival was hosted and coordinated by MSU’s Music Maker Productions, a student-led organization that specializes in bringing global and local music acts to campus.

Attendees of Old Main Music Festival enjoyed a plethora of fun activities, food, and live music for free. The festival held two stages: a main stage and a local stage. The live music kicked off at the local stage in the early afternoon with regionally known musicians The Bends, Take Twelve, Flora, and Emmy Moyen. Later, as the sun started to go down, concert-goers’ attention was turned away from the local stage as Nashville-based alternative country-rock artist John Hart took to the main stage. Finally, fans rushed to the front of the crowd to see the headliner, San Francisco Bay Area R&B/Pop singer Marc E. Bassy perform.
In the early stages of the pandemic, there was a united front to create a vaccine. Yet, even as several were created, many people were hesitant. Faculty and staff at Mississippi State University recognized this hesitancy and saw the need to promote the effectiveness of vaccines. MSU wanted to inform its students about the facts of COVID-19 and encourage people to get vaccinated. The Delta Health Alliance (DHA) Grant allowed MSU to do just that.

The DHA is a non-profit organization wanting to improve “the health and education of the men, women, and children who make the Mississippi Delta their home,” through research, funding programs and education, according to the Delta Health Alliance website. The DHA received funding dollars, specifically for COVID-19 vaccine initiatives, which they funneled into a grant-based system.

Dr. Regina Hyatt, Vice President for Student Affairs, wrote a proposal for the DHA Grant, which was awarded summer 2021. The grant provided funding for marketing and communications efforts. The purpose of applying to this grant was to promote vaccine adoption across MSU’s campus, inform students and staff about the facts of COVID-19 and create convenient opportunities to get vaccinated on campus.

Dr. Hyatt reached out to her staff to create and implement the tactics in the grant on campus. Among this staff was Katie Corban, the Marketing and Communication Director for the Division of Student Affairs and the Division of Access, Diversity and Inclusion. “We were trying to help dispel myths - to provide information from reliable sources into people’s daily lives so that they could then make an educated choice for themselves about whether or not to get the vaccine,” Corban said.

Alongside Corban was Carson Brantley, Marketing and Events Coordinator. The two were tasked with brainstorming, designing, and executing the marketing and communications tactics proposed in the grant. Marketing materials included Reflector ads, sponsorships with Bulldog Bash, t-shirts, bus shelter ads, yard signs, information cards sharing vaccination clinic times and facts about COVID, and a video series.
One of the largest pieces of the grant was the implementation of the Vaccine Ambassadors program. This was a group of 20 students who worked to promote vaccine adoption across campus; help set up for vaccination clinics; and gauge student attitudes towards the vaccine. Corban and Brantley oversaw the Vaccine Ambassadors and worked with them directly to send out accurate information onto campus.

Having students filling the positions as Vaccine Ambassadors created opportunities for peer-to-peer mentorship centered around vaccination. Brantley shared it was what they called having “boots on the ground” to send students out to hear from their peers any questions or concerns surrounding the vaccine.

The Vaccine Ambassadors encouraged open dialogue about vaccines rather than attempting to sway people one way or the other. “We didn't urge the ambassadors to go in and try to change people’s minds,” Brantley said. “We just wanted them to present the facts and let people know that the vaccine was available and where to go if they wanted a vaccine on campus.” Brent Crocker, MSU’s emergency manager, oversaw the vaccine clinics on campus, where the Vaccine Ambassadors often helped. “The ambassadors did a really good job of filling in any gaps that we had, from helping to set up as well as helping to take down.” Crocker said.

Crocker was responsible for coordinating with several organizations on and off campus to ensure the drive-thru vaccine clinics would run smoothly. After a few drive-thru clinics, Crocker decided to switch to indoor facilities on campus, including the Humphrey Coliseum, Newell-Grissom, Mitchell Memorial Library and the Dawg House. A total of 4,752 people registered to be vaccinated on campus.

After students received the vaccine, whether from one of MSU’s vaccine clinics or from another provider, students could submit a picture of their vaccination card to potentially win one of several incentives MSU was offering. These incentives included a tuition giveaway, parking decals, on-campus dining dollars, national championship rings, book vouchers, Adidas shoes, and more.

Corban shared she is proud of the work they put forth towards promoting COVID vaccines on campus. “There is just not an instruction manual out there of how to handle a global pandemic,” Corban said. “So, we did the best we could and I think the work that we produced is something to be proud of.”
Mississippi State is set apart from other schools by an emphasis on joining collegiate clubs that can help give students unique experiences, a networking tool, and life-lasting friendships. One unique way to do all of those things is through the Mississippi State Bass Fishing Club, whose goal is to promote the sport of bass fishing and compete against other universities in bass fishing competitions. They compete in events throughout the Southeast put on by BASS, Major League, and the Bass Fishing Association: the three governing bodies of bass fishing.

The club was founded in 2009 and has had plenty of success since then. Throughout 2014 ad 2015, MSU was the leading school and has always been in the top 30. Two of the founding members compete in bass fishing professionally. Lon Yeary, a graduate student at Mississippi State and a current member of the Bass Fishing team, has been able to compete in over nine different states. “This opportunity has helped me build several lasting relationships, and the travel opportunities are incredible,” says Yeary.

Since 2015, Unified Sports has been a fun way for MSU students, ACCESS students, and staff to be able to compete in intramurals such as flag-football, kickball, and basketball on MSU’s campus. Started in October of 2021, Mississippi State’s organization, S.O.U.P. (Special Olympics Unified Program), has competed at the regional and national levels in flag football and took home the silver medal at this summer’s USA Special Olympics in Orlando, FL.

TJ Bobak, ACCESS’s Graduate Assistant and S.O.U.P.’s Athletic Coordinator, says, “We are excited to continue to develop this part of the program for team sports and individual events. Though I will be graduating in the spring of 2023, I hope by the end of 2025 we have the ability to compete in Bocce, Powerlifting, Track & Field, and Basketball. That way, hopefully all ACCESS students at MSU and community members in the surrounding area can have the opportunity to compete at USA Special Olympics in 2026 in Minneapolis!”

Bobak goes on to say that the Special Olympics is a unique way to celebrate individual’s with disabilities and give them the opportunity to participate in experiences that neurotypical athletes are able to do. S.O.U.P. is a recognized campus organization and can be found on Cowbell Connect as well as Facebook (Mississippi State University Special Olympics) and Instagram (msstate_soup).
The Lyceum Series is Mississippi State University’s longest-running performing arts series which has occurred for the last 75 years. The series serves as an integral part of the university’s continued commitment to the exposure and educational value of the arts. MSU students, staff, and community members are introduced to nationally renowned artists in various performance venues to present educational and cultural themes to the community.

The Lyceum Series focuses on programming featuring the performing arts: dance, vocal talent, instrumental performances and orchestras, physical talent (such as acrobatics), theatre, and live performance art.

“Through art - be it music, dance, or theatre - we are able to tell the collective stories of humankind; build and maintain bonds with our neighbors; develop understanding and appreciation for other people and cultures; and take time to sit in the comfort of your friends, family, and peers,” said Julia Pratt, coordinator of the Lyceum Series.

The Lyceum Series caters to all ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the 74th annual Lyceum Series, a matinee performance of Paragon Ragtime Orchestra’s “Around the Christmas Tree” was presented to the community. Hundreds of students from the Partnership Middle School were able to attend to enjoy the music while learning about the history of traditional holiday music as well.

Some of the 2022 Lyceum Series performances included “The Greatest Love of All: A Tribute to Whitney Houston” and “Syncopated Ladies,” an exciting tap routine. The events took place on Mississippi State’s campus at the Bettersworth Auditorium.

“We are so fortunate to have MSU as a part of our community. We are able to take advantage of the numerous educational and enriching opportunities offered through the Lyceum Series!” said Dr. Joan Butler, former educator, and community member.

The appreciation of the arts at Mississippi State University continues to grow on campus and in the Starkville community, thanks to the efforts and exposure that is the Lyceum Series. “It is crucial that we find time in all of our lives to connect with the things that make life beautiful, and in doing so, we can also connect with one another,” said Pratt.

The Mississippi State University Performing Arts Committee welcomes contributions that will enhance its ability to maintain the Lyceum Series. For more information, please contact Lynn Shurden at the MSU Foundation at 662-325-8918.
The Division of Student Affairs provides opportunities for growth to Mississippi State students. Visit msufoundation.com to learn more and contribute. On the giving form, designate “other” at the top and under “I want to contribute to:” use the box to indicate which program you want your gift to directly benefit.

STUDENT AFFAIRS GENERAL FUND

Bully’s Closet and Pantry assists students who are experiencing food insecurity and lacking other basic needs. National data around food and basic need insecurity indicates approximately 30% of college students are in need. This is an unfortunate reality for some of our MSU student body. Since its opening in 2020, Bully’s Closet and Pantry has assisted hundreds of MSU students by providing nutritious food, basic personal necessities and household goods, and professional clothing. Through this program, Mississippi State can lessen the financial stressors some students face daily, allowing them to focus on the important goal of attaining their college degree.
The Collegiate Recovery Community (CRC) is a comprehensive support program that aids students in recovery from the deadly disease of addiction so they can achieve academic success. It is a vital outreach service that provides a source of hope for students of MSU. The CRC is dedicated to helping students achieve success academically, professionally, and spiritually, and works tirelessly to ensure recovery support is available to those who need it. Private support is a much-needed resource that ensures the continued success of CRC programming. Please consider making a gift to CRC and investing in the power of recovery and brighter futures for our Bulldog students.

The Mississippi State University New Maroon Camp is a five-day, four-night student-led legacy camp that prepares first-year students for the transition to Mississippi State University. At New Maroon Camp, students learn what it really means to be a Mississippi State Bulldog. This includes giving students the opportunity to experience and learn about MSU history & traditions (the cowbell, the Chapel of Memories, etc.), meet other incoming students, and gain insight into freshman year. Students leave the camp experience feeling a strong connection to Mississippi State, making their transition to being a student even easier. From the anxious faces on the first evening welcome to the big smiles of our student's receiving their New Maroon Camp cowbell on day 4, the transformation is incredible! While the cost for the event is affordable for most families, it is not possible for everyone. Your gift today would help defray that cost and give more students a chance to attend New Maroon Camp.
The Student Association President, Kennedy Guest, is excited to lead the Mississippi State Student Body in the 2022-23 school year. Kennedy is from Brandon, Mississippi, and a senior accounting major aspiring to obtain a minor in pre-law. Kennedy is a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, Mississippi State Chapter of College Republicans, and served as chairman of the Mississippi Federation of College Republicans, in addition to his involvement with Student Association, previously serving as Vice President. Kennedy describes his time in The Student Association as rewarding by being able to advocate for the student body and aid in the effort of equipping others to do so. “It’s one thing to get a policy changed or get a facility, but it’s something entirely different to equip senators to succeed and then watch them do it on their own.” Kennedy plans to continue making changes for the student body to leave a legacy for the classes to come. He has already done this by implementing a grade distribution tool that will appear when students register for courses. This tool will show how many As, Bs, Cs, etc., were awarded in the previous semester to allow students to make educated decisions when choosing their courses. In collaboration with the Vice President for 2022-23, Kennedy and Ann Olivia Radicioni have advocated and achieved accessible feminine hygiene products in various restrooms on campus. “I think this will be a game changer for female students and The Student Association will be dedicated to ensuring they are stocked and well kept to hopefully expand to more restrooms in the future.”
Sarah Rendon, a Starkville native, served as Camp Director for New Maroon Camp in 2022. She is a junior communication major with concentrations in communication and media studies. Additionally, she is a member of Music Maker Productions, the Social Justice Committee, the university’s Mental Health Task Force, a former member of the Student Association, former Director of Freshman Group, Freshman Edge, and a former academic peer mentor in the ACCESS Program. “The most rewarding part of this position has been to see the incredible potential in students and play a small role in encouraging them to reach that potential. I feel so lucky for the opportunity to grow from and with the individuals I work with on a daily basis.” During her time as New Maroon Director, she hopes to foster an environment of respect, dignity, and safety for all staff that will hopefully pour over into this year of camp. It is a continuous endeavor to try and earn leadership because it is not about accomplishments, numbers, or accolades—it is about how you make people feel.

Jayden Magee is a senior marketing major from Gulfport, Mississippi, and serves as a videographer for Student Affairs. Additionally, he is a creative video intern for Hail State Productions and a member of the Black Student Association. Upon applying for a photography position at Hail State Productions, Magee ended up in a videographer role and has not looked back since. He found his passion for videography when he was injured in high school and could no longer play football, so he started taking pictures to still connect with sports at his school. The most rewarding aspect of his role with Student Affairs is making videos that inform students about the various resources on campus that many may not be aware exist. Currently and in the future, he hopes his informational videos, like campus landmarks, will allow incoming students to learn about MSU history and geographical locations before they arrive at school. “It’s good to know a basis of where you are going and having that familiarity.”
Sierra Williams is a sophomore biochemistry major with pre-pharmacy aspirations from Youngstown, Ohio. She currently works for University Recreation as a lifeguard and lifeguard instructor. The most rewarding part of her experience has been reaching her goal of becoming a lifeguard instructor and giving back to the Youngstown community by teaching people how to become a lifeguard and swim. Sierra’s passion for lifeguarding began in Youngstown, when she was a member of the Youngstown Lifeguard Academy. This program taught young kids to become lifeguards and have money through a job at 15 years old. Through this experience, she learned communication and leadership skills that shaped her into the role she currently serves at University Recreation. “I try to have a good attitude towards people and bring a smile to work every day to make the job fun for everybody involved.”

Nathan Mosley is a sophomore from Vicksburg, Mississippi, and is currently studying biomedical engineering with an emphasis on pre-medicine. Nathan serves as a mentor for Luckyday Scholars Program, which strives to incorporate scholarship, community service, and leadership to first-year college students who exhibit these characteristics. Mentors can work together towards a goal and shape how the organization will grow for the better in the future. In addition to Luckyday, Nathan is an orientation leader, Special Events Chair for NPHC, Treasurer for Men of Excellence, Director of Logistics for SPARK, and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. The most rewarding part of Nathan’s role is seeing the students grow and learn, which helps Nathan learn. “I have a servant heart and servant leadership is huge in Luckyday so I feel I’m able to best serve and learn here.”
The student activity fee campaign started as a simple effort to improve University Recreation for MSU students. Recognizing the role that recreation plays in campus life, along with student physical and mental health, Student Association leaders sought to address shortcomings at the Sanderson Center.

“We wanted to make real improvements within University Recreation, but we knew that would require real investment,” said former Student Body President Garrett Smith. “We knew that the best way to raise those kinds of funds, and to demonstrate a commitment to real change, was to do it ourselves.”

After conversations with university administration, it became clear that raising the student activity fee was a real possibility, and would fundamentally change student life at MSU for years to come. However, such a change had to be approved not only by university administration, but also by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, a governing body for all public colleges in the state of Mississippi. In order to gain their approval, the Student Association would have to demonstrate strong support from the student body as a whole. To do this, they decided to include a special ballot initiative on the October 2021 Homecoming Ballot, asking students if they would support a small increase in the student activity fee. The SA began putting together a campaign to communicate to students just how impactful a change in the student activity fee could be, with benefits that extended beyond recreation.

“Not only were we able to produce a new source of funding for University Recreation, we were also able to increase funding for student activities, where this fee was already going. This includes not only our large student events, such as Bulldog Bash and Cowbell Yell, but also appropriations for smaller student organizations to throw their own events, on the single condition that all students are invited free of charge,” said Smith.

The campaign was aptly titled “This Means More,” alluding to the more student events, more organization appropriations, and more recreation opportunities that would be made possible by one simple change. A series of social media posts informed students about how the money would be spent, including details of specific construction projects to come at the Sanderson Center. At the same time, student leaders from the SA were tabling on the Drill Field and visiting student organizations to discuss the change, all leading up to the vote.

In the end, over 75% of voting by nearly 6,000 student voters supported the raise, an overwhelming display of student support. Coupled with a Student Association Senate resolution, President Garrett Smith presented a memo to university administration, who then attached the fee change to their budget approval process for the following year. The Student Association looks forward to new additions at the Sanderson Center as well as other recreation facilities, and cannot wait to see the impact that an increased student activity fee will have on MSU’s student organizations.
THE NPHC PLAZA PROJECT
The NPHC Plaza project completed the initial design replica to begin the fundraising efforts for representation of all 9 NPHC chapters at MSU.

The NPHC Plaza will be able to tell a story about the history of NPHC organizations and the uniqueness of the chapters on MSU’s campus. The plaza will be a place where students can gather for events including but not limited to chapter anniversaries, new member presentations, founders’ day celebrations, social gatherings, and more. These funds will allow the students in the community to have more representation on campus.

For more information on the NPHC Plaza or supporting MSU’s Division of Student Affairs through annual and endowed gifts, contact: Jana Berkery, Director of Development jberkery@foundation.msstate.edu 662.325.9129

ALPHA CHI OMEGA RECOLONIZATION
Alpha Chi Omega Sorority began their re-establishment process at Mississippi State University last fall. The Panhellenic sorority is off to a great start and plans to break ground for their new house soon. For more information about Alpha Chi Omega at Mississippi State, please visit their website at msstatealphachi.org

ATO COMING BACK
Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity reestablished at Mississippi State University in 2021. The Interfraternity Council chapter started with over 40 members and has quickly established a presence on campus. For more information about Alpha Tau Omega, please visit their website at ato.org

IOTA PHI THETA
Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., a member of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, reestablished their chapter this spring 2022 semester. The NPHC is excited to now have all of the Divine Nine active on campus.
Dear Friends,

As we celebrate the 2021-2022 academic year in this edition of Maroon Traditions, I want to extend my sincere appreciation for the team members in the Division of Student Affairs who have worked so hard during the past two years managing our pandemic response. We were able to turn the corner to some degree of “normalcy” during this past academic year and I know our team, our students, and the university community are all grateful for the support and care provided by our alumni, families, and friends during this time. The return of campus traditions like New Maroon Camp, Bulldog Bash, and Homecoming were welcomed and we had a lot of fun along the way. Our team worked hard to help continue to keep the community safe and our Cowbell Well initiatives took center stage in the fall of 2021. A big SHOUT-OUT to our Vaccine Ambassadors and MarComm team for their efforts especially!

In 2022-2023 academic year, I remain so appreciative of the Mississippi State community, our staff, and our students. There is a lot to look forward to as we focus on taking care of what matters – our students! We are doing that in new and creative ways as we implement new mental health services and wellbeing programs, as we work to address barriers to student success, and as we strive to elevate our student life experiences. We are excited about telling these stories and as always, Hail State!
CENTER FOR STUDENT ACTIVITIES &
FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE

Student Activities had 35 new registered organizations and a total of 260 registered student organizations. These organizations hosted over 5,000 meetings, tabling, and events on campus this year, including the first-ever Last Day of Class carnival, which had over 500 students attend, and a new Dawgs After Dark event at Hogwarts, which had over 450 students attend.

Fraternities & Sororities at MSU raised over $550,000 in philanthropy dollars and performed over 65,000 service hours during the 2021-2022 academic year. Fraternity & Sorority members have a 14% higher graduation rate than non-affiliated students, which continues to increase yearly.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Emergency Management hosted a full-scale emergency exercise on campus, involving eight university departments and six outside agencies.

Emergency Management offered numerous preparedness sessions to the university, including Severe Weather Preparedness, Emergency Go-Bags, Basic Emergency Response, and Personal Preparedness.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Marketing and Communications completed over 500 marketing requests for the Division of Student Affairs; the Division of Access, Diversity and Inclusion; and Student Success.

They also implemented the Vaccine Ambassadors marketing campaign and trained 20 students to promote vaccine adoption on campus during Fall 2021.

This team partnered with the Alumni Association to host a reunion of past recipients of the Spirit of State award for this year’s awards ceremony.
HEALTH PROMOTION AND WELLNESS

Health Promotion and Wellness secured funding sources with the Department of Food Science, Nutrition, and Health Promotion, Psychology Department, and the University of Southern Mississippi to meet the health and well-being needs of the campus.

Active Minds, MSSAS, Healthy Dawgs, and Recovery Ally Dawgs have successfully maintained membership, hosted various programs with our office, trained as allies, and become Certified Peer Educators.

COLYARD STUDENT UNION AND EVENT SERVICES

The Colvand Student Union accommodated over 4,600 events in the CSU and Bettersworth Auditorium during the 2021-2022 school year.

Event Services provided equipment and staff support ranging from sound systems, tables, chairs, staging, and tents to over 1,500 events during the 2021-2022 school year.

Event Services added additional equipment to their inventory to better support our clients, including a state-of-the-art 100-panel HD video wall.

STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES

Student Counseling Services provided services to 1,377 students for a total of 7,643 appointments.

In-person and virtual therapy services were provided with in-person groups for disordered eating and trauma-related issues.

A contract with Baptist Behavioral Health Care in Columbus was secured to ensure adequate hospitalization space.

OFFICE OF SURVIVOR SUPPORT

Along with grant funding, The Office of Survivor Support was also awarded the MS Attorney General’s Outstanding Service to Crime Victims Award.

CENTER FOR AMERICA’S VETERANS

The center increased the military-connected student population in the Fall of 2021 to just over 3,100 students. This is highest number of enrollments on record for military-connected students.

The center also awarded the highest number of scholarships, totaling nearly $100,000, to our military-connected students. This is highest number on record!
HOUSING AND RESIDENCE LIFE

The Housing and Residence Life Environment Engagement committee worked to enhance the residential community areas and placemaking within the residence halls with special consideration made to our traditional halls (Critz, Hull, Sessums, McKee, Herbert, Cresswell, and Hathorn). These areas received new pots, pans, and kitchen utensils; additional tables and chairs for enhanced study areas; new picnic tables; shower heads; and lighting improvements.

HRL also revamped our annual resident assessment and created our first staff assessment that gathered feedback on staff learning and satisfaction.

PARENT AND FAMILY SERVICES

The Office of Parent and Family Services welcomed the return of their fall family event, Bulldog Family Weekend. Over 1,200 guests (approximately 320 families of current MSU students) from 25 states attended.

Off-Campus Student Services welcomed two new partners through its collaboration with College Pads, bringing the total off-campus partnerships to 18.

MSU DINING

Dining partnered with Bully’s Closet & Pantry to help reduce costs and improve efficiency by delivering items to the pantry’s location and donating over 10,000 Block Meals to students in need through the Block-by-Block program.

They also donated over 230 meals to Casserole Kitchen, a local non-profit organization that provides free hot meals to individuals in the community each week.

Marketplace at Perry and Fresh Food Company received AllerCheck certification. Allercheck is a review of the location, menus, ingredients, services, policies, procedures, and missions for safer allergen service.

PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT

Through the efforts of the professional development team, the Office of Planning and Assessment successfully created and conducted division-wide professional development related to the ACPA/NASPA Personal and Ethical Foundations competency, resulting in over 50 individuals reaching a foundational level of competency.

UNIVERSITY POLICE

UPD received accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc (CALEA). The CALEA accreditation program seals are reserved for use by those public safety agencies that have demonstrated compliance with CALEA standards and have been awarded CALEA accreditation by the commission.

The department increased its green vehicle fleet by adding a Hybrid K9 Unit.
The Bookstore introduced the First Day by Course program to a select number of courses for fall, spring, and summer semesters. This implementation resulted in student success on the first day of classes in the pilot courses.

They had the chance to partner with the Division of Student Affairs, Office of the Provost, and Office of the Registrar to introduce the Bulldog Bundle, a first day complete program ensuring all undergraduate students have their course materials by the start of each semester.

The Longest Student Health Center conducted 30,729 total appointments from June 2021 to May 2022. A total of 1,379 of those appointments were for mental health services, with 399 unique individuals. A total of 29,350 of those appointments were clinic services.

The LSHC also promoted the new Executive Director of University Health Services, Dr. Katrina Poe.

The Disability Resource Center administered 7,724 accommodated tests for 1,601 different courses.

ACCESS students on the Special Olympics team traveled to the USA Games in Orlando, Florida. They earned silver medals in flag football, and one student earned gold medals in weightlifting and qualified for the World Special Olympics in Berlin, Germany in June 2023.

The center also added more technology support for students and instructors. Captioning thousands of minutes of video; loaning smart pens and training students to use them for note-taking; and providing live captioning through Remote Typewell services for students who are hard of hearing were some of these supports.

A total of 154 incoming freshmen (including 8 ACCESS students) completed the Day One Leadership Program class in Fall 2021. Eighty-three percent of the students made an A, and all students contributed to 2,982 hours of service.

Twenty-nine students completed the Montgomery Leadership Program experience. Sixteen completed their capstone projects within the Starkville community.
UNIVERSITY RECREATION

Based on positive feedback from a focus group, the Student Association, University Recreation, and Housing and Residence Life collaborated to create a small fitness center in Magnolia Hall to help promote student health and well-being.

In the Spring semester, University Recreation collaborated with two Architecture professors and 13 2nd- and 3rd-year architecture students to design and build an Outdoor Adventures Rental Shop in the Sanderson Center’s disused food-service area.

University Recreation collaborated with MSU’s Center for America’s Veterans to plan and host a 5K and 10K run supporting veterans.

DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE

The Dean of Students Office provided updated information regarding best practices to assist students in distress to all academic departments through departmental presentations, workshops, and individual consultations.

Bully’s Closet and Pantry had more than 2,500 total visits, meeting the needs of almost 500 students. Over 20,000 meals were awarded through the Block-By-Block Meal Program.

To better serve the needs of our students and to assist in the Care and Concern Team more robustly, the Dean of Students Office partnered with the Division of Access, Diversity and Inclusion to embed a Coordinator for Student Support & Care within the Dean of Students Office.

After a two-year hiatus, the Dean of Students Office hosted the Legal Issues Conference. We welcomed over 180 participants from four different states and 47 institutions of higher learning.

The Student Honor Code office experienced an anticipated decrease in overall cases as the institution returned to face-to-face classroom instruction. Cases dropped from 460 (20-21 AY) to 323 (21-22 AY). A total of 69% of the 323 cases were adjudicated directly by the Student Honor Code Office.

COMPUTER - BASED TESTING SERVICES

The testing center administered 2,016 professional and certification exams for university and community candidates for the July 1, 2021 – June 15, 2022 time frame.
Reflecting on this past year, Mississippi State was still trying to navigate a world of rises in COVID cases. The fall semester started with mask mandates and a grant-funded initiative to increase vaccination rates among our student body. From this came a messaging overhaul of all things Cowbell Well. Our teams continued to pivot, trying to make the most out of our students being back in person on campus and providing them with a college experience as best we could under the continuously changing climate.

This past year also brought new triumphs and challenges to our office by helping lead marketing and communications for the Division of Access, Diversity and Inclusion and Student Success initiatives on campus. Maroon Traditions is still entirely created and written by current students, and this year we have had the highest number of student writers! Students from various colleges and majors contributed this year to a piece we are genuinely proud to share with you. The 2021-2022 academic year was a steady transition back to normal operations on campus, and we hope you enjoy reading about the accomplishments, fresh starts, and programs we had throughout it.

As always, I could not have done this without my team. I want to give my MarComm Team a shout-out for continuing to push and challenge themselves to be better. Our team has grown this year, and with growth comes growing pains and success, and this magazine represents that. We continue to produce more and more quality content every year, and it amazes me to see the passion and drive that come from not only my students in this office but the student body in general. So much is accomplished at Mississippi State every year, and we are happy to share our publication with you. I want to conclude this year’s magazine by thanking you for your support and time this past academic year.