In November of 2008, nineteen print, television, and radio journalist landed in Jackson Mississippi to soak up all the insight, hospitality, and knowledge the state has to offer. The journalists from all parts of Africa were part of the Edward R. Murrow program of the U. S. Department of State named after the famed and fearless journalist.

The visiting journalists had the opportunity to tour JSU’s state-of-the-art television station, and met with students, faculty and staff. The Murrow Fellows community tour didn’t end on the campus. The International Visitor Center of Jackson saw to it that the journalists received a full grasp of the past, present and future of the state. The journalists participated in panel discussions about several aspects of the states dynamics, including the history of racial discrimination, poverty, and health disparities. The group also delved into the agricultural heritage of the State.

What most struck the visitors was the warm hospitality they received from Mississippians from all stripes. “I did not expect this hospitality,” said Patrick Kamara, a television news producer and reporter from Uganda. Kamara said “Ugandans think America is monolithic like the Chicago or New York they see on television, but it’s different in Mississippi. I am having a good time. Everyone is very friendly.” Denver Issacks of Nameibia said that the panel discussion with civil rights activist was “valuable for my understanding of how far the US has come.”

(Excepts taken from The Ledge Fall 2008 Newsletter. Written by JSU students Kenitra Brown and DiKobi Berry.)
Jackson State University and the University of Zululand in South Africa participated in an exchanger, whereby students from both universities were given the chance to study at the partnering university. The universities have signed a memorandum of understanding to this effect.

The students from the University of Zululand came to JSU to study for two weeks. Their first week students lived with their host families and then later lived in dorms to get the college experience. Eight JSU students in turn, visited the University of Zululand for two weeks during the 2008 Thanksgiving holiday.

Este Mentee a student of the University of Zululand explains that “JSU staff and students were very welcoming. The students we met around campus were open minded and willing to learn what Africa is all about, South Africa in particular. I enjoyed learning about the USA. It was quite an eye opening experience to share a campus with people who can easily engage with you in informative discussions even though they were meeting you for the first time. JSU rocks!”

JSU student Kim says, “Traveling to Africa was an indescribable experience. The journey to see the same racism and cruelty as the civil rights movement and slavery in the states was interesting. Africa makes you reevaluate the things in life that we take for granted. It opens your eyes to a different form of struggle and the way people cope with situations such as poverty and AIDS. It made me realize that no matter how hard or tough times get, you can always manage to overcome and smile. People living in the worst conditions ever were never saddened or depressed; they still lived their lives as if they lived in a mansion. Africans take pride in their history, culture, and who they are as a race. My favorite excursion in Africa was visiting the apartheid museum and the prison of Nelson Mandela. It informed me of the history the books are afraid to tell because of how cruel it really was.

Yolanda Davis, the JSU study abroad coordinator says the program was a success. “Students from both universities truly got to experience of study abroad. This was a true exchange of cultures, ideas and thoughts.

Nine Jackson state students took the Spring 2009 semester off to study abroad in Malaga Spain. While in Spain the students are experiencing the county up close and personal with native Spaniards by living with host families. It also give them the chance to brush up on their Spanish.

Academic credit hours will be awarded upon the completion of the course, which are being offered at the Malaga Institute.

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**JSU in Spain**

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**UPCOMING INT’L Visitors**

European Program on Foreign Policy
Multi–Regional American Youth
Nigerian Sustainable Development
Swaziland Democratic Government and Citizen Participation

**EVENTS**

2009 JSU International Week
Eight energetic educators trailed through central Mississippi taking up all she had to offer. All were from countries in South and Central Asia, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. The participants of this program stayed in Mississippi for four days and toured several institutions involved in secondary and elementary education. The trip included meetings with the Mississippi Department of Education, Lexington Elementary School, The Holmes county Vocational Education Center and meeting with the Mileys, a couple who home schools. In Holmes County the group also meet with representatives from Nollies Citizens for Quality Education.

The group was brought to Mississippi under the auspices of the United States Department of State International Visitor Leadership Program through a “Education Today” program administered by the Academy for Education Development Visitor Exchange Program.

The visitors were quite pleased with their appointments and program. Asla Zafar, an pre-school teacher from Pakistan says “I enjoyed my stay in Mississippi a lot. The people were nice and warm. The schools I visited were brilliant. I got a chance to spend time with the teachers as well as with the kids whom I will always remember.”

Nine eager foreign young minds entered the Jackson State University campus ready to learn in August of 2008. All of the students were participants in the Near East and South Asia (NESA) Undergraduate Exchange Program at Jackson State University. The students hail from the countries of Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Morocco, Oman, and Tunisia. The NESA is a program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), U.S. Department of State.

The goal of the program is to increase the mutual understanding between young emerging leaders from the Near East and South Asia and the United States by providing meaningful academic and cultural experiences at U.S. academic institutions. The immersion experience on American campuses ensures that participants gain a first-hand understanding of the American way of life which will build lasting bonds of friendship and result in the development of peaceful and constructive relations between their nations and the United States.

One of the program participants, Mr. Charif Arous is a good example of the ideal candidate and success story for goals of the NESA program. Arous was involved in several community service projects in his country of Algeria. While at JSU he and other students took part in a community service project with Habitat for Humanity. Arous was pleasantly surprised at the level of friendliness and cordiality of the relationships students have with teacher. Emna Darragi, a participant from Tunisia agreed. “I love the relationships between students and their professors, I really admire it. It’s a friendship relation that push the students to study and to succeed” said Darragi.

She further describes her time in the NESA program as “a great experience. It was true that it was very hard at the beginning, but in time I got used to it and came to appreciate the university. The people at Jackson State were so sociable which helped me make a lot of friends easily. I also discovered the southern accent and traditions, which were new aspects America to me.”
2008 in Pictures

Rev. John C. Cameron with South African group at home hospitality. (October 2008)

Dr. Ally Mack, greeting then Senator Barak Obama at his JSU campus visit. (March 2008)

L-R: Derwin Miller, Muminjon Ochilovich, MCID Visitor from Tajikistan, and Christina Nica. (July 2008)

Home hospitality at NCIV Conference in Atlanta GA. (August 2008)

Home hospitality of Murrow Journalists. (November 2008)

Group of Japanese Visitors and escort. (September 2008)

Algerian group meeting with Parents for Public Schools representative. (April 2008)

Home hospitality of Mrs. Evita Neefs from Belgium. (November 2008)

Ukrainian Group meeting with Mayor Harvey Johnson. (March 2008)

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