



Media Release **Public Relations**

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Date: June 20, 2007

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TEACHERS GETTING LESSONS IN SCIENCE EDUCATION AT JSU

(Jackson, Miss.) — More than 50 teachers from throughout central Mississippi are taking classes at Jackson State University this summer to learn how to improve student achievement in science.

The fifth- through eighth-grade teachers from 45 school districts are participating in the Mississippi Academy for Science Teaching, or Project MAST 4U. The theme is, "From conceptual understanding to exemplary practice in science education." The program, now in its fourth year, targets districts with teacher certification needs and/or low state-mandated test scores.

Program director Mehri Fadavi, a JSU physics professor, said Project MAST 4U emphasizes content knowledge in two courses. The first course began June 18 and ends June 29. The second one will be taught on eight Saturdays throughout the 2007-08 school year.

"You can know how to teach, but not knowing what to teach" can affect test scores, Fadavi said. "The teachers here already know how to teach; we're giving them what to teach."

Participants can earn six graduate credit hours in classes that focus on physics, space science and meteorology as well as chemistry, environmental science and geology. JSU and metro-area instructors, as well as faculty from as far away as Cornell University in New York and the James Cook University Center for Astronomy in Australia, are teaching the courses.

In addition to teaching about science from a global perspective, Project MAST 4U also is giving the teachers a chance to participate in hands-on activities such as exploring the SkyLab/Portable Planetarium and making circuits using Christmas tree lights, copper tape, batteries and a manila folder.

Brian Johnson, a fifth-grade science and social studies teacher, quietly worked on his circuit project Monday.

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“This is going to give me more hands-on activities to use with the students to enhance the textbook knowledge that they have,” said Johnson, who works at Johnson Elementary School in Jackson.

Adrienne Ramsey, a 2004 JSU graduate, said MAST not only is allowing her to gain academic credits to earn a master of arts in teaching from JSU, it also is helping her to become a certified science teacher.

“I will be able to integrate math and science in my classroom from the activities and experience I receive here,” said the seventh- and eighth-grade math teacher at Nichols Middle School in Canton.

JSU graduate Tamara Taylor, a certified seventh- and eighth-grade science teacher at Peeples Middle School in Jackson, participated in MAST last year. She is using her graduate credit hours to earn a master’s in science teaching.

“Being that this is my second time, I’ve enjoyed it thoroughly,” said Taylor, who earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from JSU in 2005. “I’m also grateful that the MAST program allows me to be involved in the Mississippi Science Teachers Association and the National Science Teachers Association.”

In addition to getting paid membership in these professional organizations, participants are receiving \$1,435 in paid tuition, more than \$800 in instructional materials/activities and a \$100 daily stipend.

JSU received a Mississippi Department of Education grant for \$1,538,584 for 2007-10 to administer Project MAST 4U. In previous years, the program received three grants totaling \$1,365,161. The program is made possible through 12 global partnerships from the public and private sectors. They include Mississippi State University, Copiah-Lincoln Community College and NASA Stennis Space Center’s Office of Education and Educator Resource Center.

Photos:

Brian Johnson: <http://www.jsums.edu/~announcements/BJohnson.JPG>

Cutline: Brian Johnson, a fifth-grade science and social studies teacher at Johnson Elementary School in Jackson, works on a circuit project as part of the Mississippi Academy for Science Teaching at Jackson State University.

Mehri Fadavi: <http://www.jsums.edu/~announcements/Fadavi.JPG>

Adrienne Ramsey: <http://www.jsums.edu/~announcements/Ramsey.JPG>

Tamara Taylor: <http://www.jsums.edu/~announcements/Taylor.JPG>