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JSU LAUNCHING PROGRAM TO TRAIN PUBLIC, CIVIC LEADERS

(JACKSON, Miss.) – Jackson State University, in conjunction with Tougaloo College, will launch a program this fall to prepare current and aspiring public leaders to better respond to Mississippi's challenges.

The Thompson, Henry, Hamer, Evers Mississippi Executive Academy for Public Leadership, or THHE MEA, is a five-month, one-weekend-a-month, certificate-awarding program for civic, nonprofit, elected and appointed government officials. The academy honors 2nd District U.S. Rep. Bennie Thompson and noted civil rights leaders Fannie Lou Hamer, Aaron Henry and Medgar Evers.

The founders of THHE MEA are former Gov. William Winter, Hattiesburg Mayor Johnnie DuPree and Joseph Martin Stevenson, founding executive director of Jackson State's Executive Ph.D. Program in Urban Higher Education.

Winter said he is pleased to be identified with the program.

"There is not another program like it in the state of Mississippi that I am aware of, and it certainly serves a most useful and vital purpose in preparing leaders to meet the challenges of the future," Winter said.

"It will afford them the opportunity of hearing first-hand the experiences and ideas of leaders whom they may look to as models for their own careers," he added.

The academy, believed to be the only one of its kind in the South, is sponsored by Jackson State's Jake Ayers Institute for Research and Tougaloo's Center for Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility.

Center director Steve Rozman said he's looking forward to Tougaloo working as an active, full partner with Jackson State.

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“Given Tougaloo’s background in the community, for JSU and Tougaloo to work together, specifically with our center, would be ideal,” said Rozman, a political science professor at Tougaloo. “I’m very impressed with what he (Stevenson) is doing at Jackson State, and we both feel the other will be an excellent partner.”

The core curriculum will address public service, community leadership, stewardship and civic responsibility. Instructors will include lay community leaders, specialized guest speakers, academicians and practitioners from throughout the Southeast.

“Hopefully, those who leave the program will be better public servants with expertise on how to work in the community and through the community as a result of collaborating with other sectors,” Stevenson said.

Participants will be selected from an applicant pool of present and future public and civic leaders. Those encouraged to apply for THHE MEA include elected or appointed officials, public managers, state government directors, managers, supervisors, community activists, local grass roots advocates, public policy entrepreneurs, school leaders, superintendents, church leaders, non-profit administrators and other stakeholders.

For more information about the Thompson, Henry, Hamer, Evers Mississippi Executive Academy for Public Leadership, call M. Fran Bridges at (601) 979-2434.

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