



MEDIA RELEASE

Public Relations

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JSU partnership aims to increase qualified educators in Louisiana, Mississippi

(JACKSON, Miss.) – Jackson State University and the University of Louisiana at Monroe have received more than \$5 million to expand alternate education programs to increase the number of qualified teachers in the Mississippi and Louisiana Delta.

TEACH DELTA REGION, a program funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement, will focus on 26 school districts in the two states including 12 Mississippi districts, says William Brown, coordinator of the JSU master of arts program in teaching.

"We are looking for college graduates who are non-education majors but have a desire to become certified to teach," says Brown.

JSU and ULM will partner with 26 local school districts in Louisiana and Mississippi to offer teachers alternative certification programs in as little as 14 months. Through comprehensive and sustained professional development, induction and mentoring, this project will have a significant impact on the number of highly qualified certified teachers.

The program is designed to meet the schedule demands of nontraditional students who may not be able to attend regular classes. Coursework will be available online, making visits to the Jackson State or ULM campus unnecessary.

A \$5,000 annual stipend, laptop computer, digital camera, professional memberships and training will provide access to online classes.

Brown looks to begin recruiting in October with the first cohort of 30 students to

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start in January 2008. He hopes that participants will reside in the respective areas of the Delta for at least three years. “We want to train people who are anchored in the community,” he says.

Charles Barron, superintendent of the Shaw School District, says he has looked for ways to increase the number of qualified teachers in the Delta for years.

“It is very difficult to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers,” says Barron, pointing out quality of life factors such as entertainment and housing. “I think this program will open doors for people who are in the middle of the state and in turn benefit our children.”

For more information, call William Brown at (601) 979-3412.

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About Jackson State University

Jackson State University, founded in 1877, is a historically black, high research activity university located in Jackson, the capital city of the state of Mississippi. Jackson State’s nurturing academic environment challenges individuals to change lives through teaching, research and service. Officially designated as Mississippi’s Urban University, Jackson State continues to enhance the state, nation and world through comprehensive economic development, health-care, technological and educational initiatives. The only university in the Jackson metropolitan area, Jackson State is located near downtown, with three satellite campuses throughout the city. For more information, visit www.jsums.edu.