



Mississippi Counseling Association
A Branch of American Counseling Association
Serving Mississippi since 1950

MCA
PO BOX 353
LONG BEACH, MS 39560

FALL 2015

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year to All! It is a great time to be a counselor in Mississippi. We are excited about the many accomplishments that will impact our profession. I want to encourage each of you to watch the MCA website for information. The MCA Day at the Capitol is now scheduled for March 9, 2016. We would like to have all counselors arrive by 9:15. We would like to attend the senate session at 10:00 and the House session at 2:00. We would like to see every counselor in the state attend on March 9th. Karla Weir and Doug Copeland are serving as this year's co- chairs of the government relations team. If you would like to work with this committee, please contact us immediately.



Early Registration for the Fall Conference will open at the end of January. Early registration will allow members to register for an extended time. The early registration deadline is a firm deadline. We are pleased to have our national Keynote Speaker secured for this conference and look forward to many information sessions. Your administrative council is working to make our organization a strong organization in our field. I would like to ask each of you to reach out to other counselors in your area and encourage them to join our Association.

Jayme Sullivan, NCC, NCSC, LPC

MCA President

THE COMPASS

FALL CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

MARSHA BISHOP & MELISSA WINDHAM
MCA 2015 CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS

The Fall MCA Conference this year seemed bigger and better than ever! The setting on the Mississippi Gulf Coast was ideal for fun and relaxation, and Biloxi Mayor Fofa Gilich was pleased to welcome us all. “The Power of Professional Counseling Relationships” was fully on display, not only in the work done through conference, but also in the quiet moments of connection among attendees.

Patrick House of “The Biggest Loser” fame was an energetic and motivational speaker at the opening session. His story of perseverance in the face of challenging circumstances spoke to not only his character, but also his powerful decision-making. What stood out about Patrick was his belief in himself, coupled with the conviction of his family and friends in providing whatever support he needed. Many commented on his authenticity and humor in telling his story.

There were many other exciting occurrences at conference, including well-attended learning institutes and sessions. We were thrilled to have Erin Shifflett, the Director of Ethics and Professional Standards of ACA to present two different ethics sessions, which were very well received. Many first-time attendees as well as veterans commented on the depth of knowledge in the sessions available this year. Finally, the eagerly awaited news of the addition of LPC’s as Medicaid providers was received after many years of legislative appeal.

Fall Conference each year offers many benefits to counselors, including the opportunity to network with colleagues, interact with relevant vendors, earn necessary CE/CEU’s, and keep updated on current trends in the field. Conference does not happen without the work and effort of many volunteers, whether on a named committee or those who just pitch in a hand where needed. We want to take this opportunity to thank our President, Jayme Sullivan, for a wonderful conference. She went above and beyond duty to create a great program and worked around the clock to plan and design such a great professional event.

The Power of Professional Counseling Relationships knows no boundaries. When we work together, we empower ourselves, our clients, and others to succeed. We look forward to seeing you next year!

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS WANTED

The Compass is searching for individuals who are interested in writing articles for the newsletter. If you are interested in contributing your expertise through an article, please contact Susan Nicolais at susan@nonprofit-growth.com. Thanks for your help!

MY YEAR AS AN EMERGING LEADER DIANA VIRGIL ED.S, LSC

Last year in September, my Internship Supervisor/mentor asked me if I had signed up for the MCA Conference. I hesitated and told her no because at that time, I did not know much about MCA. After much more information, I decided to join as a student member. Once I arrived at the conference, I was so excited because for the first time in my life, I was among several individuals in the counseling profession. From there, I attended various sessions and meetings; which led to me being elected as Secretary/Treasurer of MGSCA. I was thrilled at the opportunity to serve among other counseling students.

Time flew by and I attended other counseling events that MCA and MSCA held. In April, I noticed the application for Emerging Leaders. At first I was very hesitant to apply, but after talking to my professors, internship supervisor/mentor, and family, I decided to apply. Ever since that day, I cannot tell you how honored I have felt to be selected. For me, it was an awesome accomplishment because I was actually starting to become more involved in MCA. Even though I could not attend the leadership institute due to military duty, my fellow emerging leaders kept me updated on everything; including our presentation for the fall conference.

When I first heard about the presentation, it frightened me because I had never spoke in front of a big crowd of people outside of the military. However, that quickly changed by the time I presented at the conference. The support that I received from my emerging leaders' class made my first time presenting special. By being an emerging leader, I was able break out of my shell and bloom into a vibrant young professional. Additionally, by being an emerging leader, it has helped me to become an advocate for the counseling profession even more, particularly for school counselors, and to help others to feel the passion for counseling just like I do. Therefore, I encourage anyone who has or wants to exhibit their leadership and advocacy skills in MCA to apply as an emerging leader.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February

February 12, 2016 Northeast Region Spring Meeting, Northeast Mississippi Community College

March

March 9, 2016, MCA Day at the Capitol, Jackson, MS

March 10 - 12, 2016, [IAMFC World Conference](#), New Orleans, LA

November

November 2-4, 2016 MCA Annual Fall Conference, Biloxi, MS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MENTAL HEALTH

PROVIDER ENROLLMENT

Effective January 1, 2016, Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs) can submit an application to become an individual MS Medicaid provider. The application is located at <https://msmedicaid.acs-inc.com/msenvision/pef/Login.do>

MEET YOUR NEWLY ELECTED OFFICERS



Elections were held at the 2015 Fall Conference for President Elect-Elect and Secretary. Here are the newest MCA Officers.

President Elect-Elect – Dr. Kimberly Hall

Kimberly is an Associate Professor in Counseling at Mississippi State University, currently serving on the Meridian Campus teaching courses in the Master's and Educational Specialist's degree programs in school counseling and clinical mental health. In this role, she encourages future counselors to make a difference in not only the lives of their clients but also in the counseling field itself.

Kimberly is honored to serve as MCA President Elect-Elect. Her goal is to see the field more united. We all aim to best serve our clients in the areas that we specialize in, whether it's vocational, clinical mental health, K-12, rehabilitation, career, etc. We want to help our clients and make this world a better place. One voice - that's the vision she has for MCA. This one voice can help us with organized advocacy efforts so that our legislators and the public recognize the rigorous training that we have all undergone to serve our clients better.

Secretary – Melissa Windham, PhD, LPC, NCSC, NCC

Melissa is the school counselor at Pascagoula High School where she has served since 2012. She was lead counselor at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Gautier from 2009 to 2012 and school counselor at Gautier High School from 2005 to 2009.

Melissa is honored to serve as the incoming Secretary for MCA. Her goal is to enhance the counseling profession through good practice, mentoring, teaching, and supervision. She strives to counsel, encourage, inform and involve others in relevant, practical and effective ways.



STATE FINANCIAL AID UPDATES

New Tool for High School Counselors

The Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid works very hard to make college AFFORDABLE for Mississippi students. We view high school counselors as our most important partners in that effort. Because of that partnership, we have created a new resource specifically for our high school counselors.

Last year, the Office updated the counselor login process in order to share more information and data with individual counselors. First we collected signed Participation Agreements from each district. Then, we assigned new unique PINs to individual high school counselors. Now, we are introducing a new tool that will enable counselors to run two new student-level reports on demand.

First, the State Aid Application Status Report will list all students who have applied for state aid. The report will also state when the application was received and if the student has any missing documents (GPA, ACT score, FAFSA, HELP Worksheet, HELP Core, etc.).

Second, the FAFSA Completion Status Report will list *all* Mississippi residents from the counselor's high school who have completed a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), even if the student has not completed a state aid application. The report will also state when the FAFSA was received, if it was submitted as "complete" or "incomplete", and if the student has been selected for Verification. The second report is being provided as part of the statewide FAFSA Completion Project to increase FAFSA completion and college enrollment. Data shows that 90% of high school graduates who complete the FAFSA go on to enroll in college.

Counselors may access the reports beginning January 1, 2016 by logging in to the Secure Counselor Web Application and selecting the option to Generate Student Reports. The reports will generate in an Excel file format to allow counselors to sort and filter the lists.

We encourage counselors to use these reports to identify students who have not completed state and federal financial aid applications and to alert students who are missing certain documents to complete an application.

Continued Page 6



STATE FINANCIAL AID UPDATES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

The Mississippi Office of State Financial Aid webpage for counselors will never win awards for web design and layout, but it is full of helpful information for high school counselors. To access the page, visit www.mississippi.edu/financialaid, and then click on the High School Counselors button.

Other Updates

The HELP Scholarship base income threshold for a family with one dependent under the age of 21 will increase from \$39,500 in 2015-16 to \$42,500 in 2016-17. The threshold increases by \$5,000 for each additional dependent under the age of 21.

The IHL College Prep Curriculum was updated earlier this year, and the HELP Core Curriculum was updated accordingly. The HELP Core Curriculum is seventeen and one-half (17-1/2) units of high school course work that includes the *REQUIRED* IHL College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC), plus one (1) additional advanced elective unit.

Speaking of the HELP Core Curriculum, counselors often ask whether specific courses are accepted as part of the Core. A course matrix, listing all public school course offerings, is now available on the HELP information webpage.

The Office will be requesting ACT scores from students and counselors more frequently than in the past. The Office still receives ACT scores directly from ACT, but ACT no longer collects Social Security Numbers. Therefore, we are now having trouble matching scores with student applications, especially if the student only takes the ACT as a junior.

Continued on Page 7

The Compass, Winter 2016

Article Submission Deadlines

Publication Date: February 29, 2016

Editorial content and photos due

February 15, 2016

Email to susan@nonprofit-growth.com

STATE FINANCIAL AID UPDATES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Counselor Reminders

- Help students complete the online application by the appropriate deadline.
 - ◇ HELP Scholarship Deadlines: March 31 (Online Application) and April 30 (Documents)
 - ◇ MTAG and MESG Deadlines: September 15 (Online Application) and October 15 (Documents)
- Help students submit necessary supporting documents. Students must submit two documents for proof of residency. In addition to residency documents, certain academic eligibility documents may also be required.
- Submit the high school grade file by April 30 each year. Instructions for creating and submitting the grade file are available on the counselor webpage.
- Certify the HELP core curriculum by April 30 each year. Instructions are available on the counselor webpage.
- Run the new reports to help students submit documents to complete their applications.

Contact the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid by emailing sfa@mississippi.edu or by calling 1-800-327-2980. Visit us online at www.mississippi.edu/financialaid.

2015 Fall Conference Overall Evaluation Ratings

Overall Conference: 87.03% rated as Meeting/Exceeding Expectations

Registration: 87.97% rated as Meeting/Exceeding Expectations

Opening Session: 88.43% rated as Meeting/Exceeding Expectations

Keynote Speaker (Patrick House): 90.17% rated as Meeting/Exceeding Expectations

Exhibit Hall: 75.39% rated as Meeting/Exceeding Expectations

Awards Luncheon: 68.04% rated as Meeting/Exceeding Expectations