



THE UNIVERSITY *of*  
**MISSISSIPPI**

MCLEAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE  
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Strategic Plan **2015-2020**

# Message from Dr. Nylander



*"The McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement pursues excellence in its programs and activities as it seeks to improve quality of life for the citizens of Mississippi."*

**DR. ALBERT NYLANDER**

DIRECTOR OF THE MCLEAN INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND  
PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

The McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement is pleased to share the Institute's first strategic plan, which has involved input from a rich and diverse set of stakeholders. The work of the McLean Institute supports the university's vision in the UM 2020 Strategic Plan of Transformation through Service. We believe our mission of advancing transformative service throughout the University and fighting poverty through education in Mississippi is bold. This strategic plan outlines a strong foundation for the next five years, and it will put into action a model for community engagement that will strengthen community-university partnerships that address social problems in our communities.

Many argue that poverty in Mississippi is too entrenched and all-consuming to reverse the prevailing trends. As engaged scholars, we have a different philosophy; we believe that structural inequalities must be addressed in order to abolish generational poverty. The McLean Institute will inspire action and mobilize long-term commitments that address these inequities. Recognizing that some of these problems are historical and systemic, we will support and implement programs directed at the structural issues facing many of our communities, such as the summer learning gap experienced by lower-income students and the lack of support for entrepreneurship to advance the public good.

The McLean Institute will support community engagement throughout the University and create initiatives to mobilize community-university partnerships that pursue shared goals. We can impact the state one person, one student, and one community at a time. Although we understand that the challenges are complex, we believe that they are solvable.

We look forward to implementing this strategic plan with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Albert Nylander

Director, McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement  
Professor of Sociology

## Strategic Planning Process

The McLean Institute strives to model, facilitate, and evaluate community engagement efforts at the University of Mississippi. Accordingly, this strategic planning process has incorporated feedback from a wide range of stakeholders that have challenged the Institute to inspire transformation at the University and in Mississippi communities.

In July 2012, the McLean Institute for Community Development expanded to become the McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement. This expansion was envisioned to support the university's call for an institutional transformation through service, a key component of the UM 2020 strategic plan. Priority Seven of the UM 2020 Strategic Plan calls for the university to reach beyond the campus by creating partnerships through community engagement. Such partnerships are crucial to the integrity and success of service-learning and community-based research.

The McLean Institute's Advisory Board, Faculty Steering Committee, the University of Mississippi's Council on Community Engagement, and Community Partners have worked to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to create this strategic plan. The planning process has garnered broad input from community members, faculty, staff, alumni, and students, with over 50 participants involved in face-to-face planning, 2,046 undergraduate and graduate students in an online student engagement survey, and 70 community partners in an online community partner survey. Through this development process, the McLean Institute has accounted for the first three years of successes and planned for the future by crafting a new mission, vision, and core values along with goals for community engagement, which will drive the work of the next five years.

Based on the input received from the groups above, the McLean Institute has developed its strategic initiatives to advance and institutionalize community engagement at the University of Mississippi, which will in turn seek to alleviate poverty in the state. This strategic plan embodies the UM 2020 priority of Transformation through Service, providing University of Mississippi faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to partner with communities to make substantive contributions to Mississippi and beyond.

The goals and strategic actions below will cultivate mutually beneficial community-university partnerships that will focus the culture of engagement on poverty alleviation efforts. The McLean Institute will fulfill its core mission of bridging the many abilities of the University with the many talents of the state's communities to serve the people of Mississippi, creating positive social change. This entails serving as a connector on- and off-campus to develop community-university partnerships that create opportunities for University of Mississippi students, faculty and staff to engage with Mississippi communities in the fight to alleviate poverty.

## McLean Institute Strategic Plan 2015-2020

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### Mission

*The McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement advances transformative service throughout the University and fights poverty through education in Mississippi.*

### Vision

*The McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement will be recognized for expanding community engagement throughout the University of Mississippi and for its success in addressing poverty in Mississippi through mutually beneficial partnerships.*

By 2020, the McLean Institute will:

- Prepare students at the University of Mississippi to act as effective agents for positive social change;
- Increase engagement opportunities that benefit University of Mississippi students, faculty, staff, and community partners;
- Enhance support for faculty members who are pursuing or interested in engaged scholarship;
- Expand scholarship and dialogue on pressing social issues throughout Mississippi; and
- Boost awareness of its commitment to fight poverty in Mississippi.

### Core Values that Guide Our Work at the McLean Institute

The McLean Institute reflects the following values in its organization and programs:

- *Academic Excellence:* The McLean Institute believes that education should be a lifelong and empowering experience open to all.
- *Transformation:* The McLean Institute recognizes the potential of the University of Mississippi to transform the inequitable structures of Mississippi that contribute to generational poverty.
- *Respect:* The McLean Institute values the strengths and assets of all people and partner organizations.
- *Integrity:* The McLean Institute believes in listening honestly, processing information accurately, and following through on its commitments.
- *Inclusion:* The McLean Institute fosters inclusivity and cultural competence in its work.

## Strategic Goals

The McLean Institute has identified two broad goals that frame its organizational priorities.

- TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SERVICE
- FIGHTING POVERTY THROUGH EDUCATION

**TRANSFORMATION THROUGH SERVICE:** *Institutionalize the culture of community engagement at the University of Mississippi.*

The McLean Institute seeks to make community engagement a distinctive part of the educational culture at the University of Mississippi by promoting engaged scholarship and reflective community action at the University. The McLean Institute will address this need and facilitate high-impact community engagement among faculty, staff, students, and community partners.

The McLean Institute will serve as a coordinator and connector to facilitate community-engagement initiatives. Strategies to support this goal will raise the profile of engaged scholarship and service; formalize academic study and university governance on community engagement; inspire learning and leadership through civic engagement, service, and professional development; and ensure the sustainability of engagement efforts at the University of Mississippi.

**Objective 1: Raise the profile of engaged scholarship and service.** The McLean Institute will lead the effort to pursue national recognition for community engagement, including the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

- Play an active role in conversations considering institutional policies for promotion and tenure that specifically reward faculty scholarly work that uses community-engaged approaches and methods.
- Develop systematic campus-wide tracking and assessment mechanisms to measure community engagement.
- Celebrate and recognize exemplary community-engaged scholarship and community service.
- Create and disseminate a biennial service-learning publication and an accompanying service-learning toolkit to all academic departments.

**Objective 2: Lead efforts to formalize academic study and university governance on community engagement.** The McLean Institute will participate in the creation of a Minor in Community and Civic Engagement and elevate the contributions of the Council on Community Engagement.

- Develop a Minor in Community and Civic Engagement.
- Expand the work of the University of Mississippi's Council on Community Engagement.

**Objective 3: Inspire learning and leadership through civic engagement, service, and professional development.** The McLean Institute will centralize resources for community engagement, and assess the impact of the University's service and engagement efforts.

- Develop and offer community engagement learning opportunities to University of Mississippi students, faculty, and staff through workshops, brown bags, speaker series, and service-learning symposia.
- Expand and promote online information and resources related to community engagement on the McLean Institute webpage.
- Integrate community engagement messaging in all hiring and orientation training for faculty and staff.

**Objective 4: Ensure the sustainability of engagement efforts at the University of Mississippi.** The McLean Institute will market and promote not only its engagement efforts but also those across campus, in order to facilitate consensus on the value of this work.

- Raise funds to support service-learning, community-based research, community engagement, and programmatic efforts across campus and in Mississippi.
- Foster a supportive governance and advisory structure through the McLean Institute Advisory Board and the Council on Community Engagement.

**FIGHTING POVERTY THROUGH EDUCATION:** *Alleviate poverty in Mississippi through academically-focused partnerships.*

Community organizations across Mississippi can benefit from the wealth of resources at the University of Mississippi. By facilitating and nurturing these relationships, the McLean Institute can support academic departments and faculty in connecting their scholarship to important societal needs. The McLean Institute will model reciprocal, mutually-beneficial partnerships that alleviate poverty with its own programs and initiatives such as Horizons at the University of Mississippi and Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (CEED).

**Objective 1: Fight poverty by promoting educational attainment.** To address educational inequities and quality of life in Mississippi, the McLean Institute will mobilize University of Mississippi students to provide a strategic progression of programs that combat the achievement gap and boost college-going aspirations. The McLean Institute will engage University of Mississippi students to provide tutoring, mentoring, and instructional time with K-12 children. The Institute will also partner with volunteers and stakeholder groups to offer financial literacy opportunities for low-income families and boost their college-going expectations.

This major area of emphasis for the McLean Institute is divided into three programmatic areas: combating the achievement gap, advancing economic development and family economic security, and expanding community engagement opportunities for University of Mississippi students. To achieve this goal in a manner that benefits all Mississippians, the McLean Institute will create partnerships with community organizations whose purpose is to alleviate poverty in

Mississippi, and work to build the University's relationships with historically and currently underserved communities.

*Combat the achievement gap*

- Continue to support Horizons at the University of Mississippi.
- Develop and participate in community-wide conversations and campaigns aimed at improving quality of life in Mississippi.
- Create a statewide youth initiative that integrates best practice of all of the McLean Institute's programs.

*Advance economic development and family economic security*

- Foster entrepreneurial approaches to addressing poverty with the Catalyzing Entrepreneurship and Economic Development program.
- Increase financial literacy while promoting opportunities for low-income college students to further their studies through programs such as Lafayette-Oxford-University Saves.

*Expand community engagement opportunities for University of Mississippi students*

- Create and expand the Student Engagement Fellows Program.
- Create and expand the McLean Mentoring Community Service Program.

**Objective 2: Foster community dialogue to build reciprocal relationships.** The McLean Institute will position itself as the central hub for community partners seeking to collaborate with the University, and will actively solicit feedback from community organizations on how to reduce barriers to accessing university resources. The CEED Initiative will model these collaborative partnerships in communities across north Mississippi and in the Delta.

- Serve as a central hub for initiating community service opportunities, with an emphasis on service-learning.
- Compile and maintain a comprehensive list of the University of Mississippi's community partners, including the development of a formal partnership request, policies, and procedures.
- Collaborate with university and community partners to identify projects that best demonstrate high quality community-engaged research.
- Collect and analyze assessment data on the outcomes associated with these partnerships.

**Objective 3: Support service-learning opportunities.** The McLean Institute will cultivate a corps of faculty who are committed to expanding service-learning offerings on campus.

- Coordinate with University Colleges/Schools and Departments to create and implement service-learning courses and support community-engaged learning.
- Create a Community-Engaged Faculty Fellows Program.

## Conclusion

The McLean Institute for Public Service and Community Engagement is serving as a catalyst for change in Mississippi. As an academic unit that serves the whole University, the McLean Institute facilitates high-impact practices that engage students, faculty, and external partners with transformative experiences in and outside the classroom. This kind of experiential learning has the power to transform those who engage in it: their thinking, their worldviews, their preconceptions, their theoretical models, and their future ambitions will all be influenced by their engagement work.

The McLean Institute is well positioned to offer University of Mississippi students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to engage in transformative service, and to develop mutually beneficial relationships that foster community development and improve educational outcomes. The McLean Institute will serve as the coordinator to connect faculty, staff, students, and community partners to a range of services and resources in order to achieve this mission.

The McLean Institute will host its first Community Engagement Forum in the spring of 2016 to provide a campus conversation for faculty, staff, and administration to discuss institutional structures and support for community engaged scholarship, teaching, and learning. To continue to meet the McLean Institute's strategic needs, the Institute will need to obtain recurring funding for staff positions and programs to strengthen and sustain the University's public service mission to the state of Mississippi. Such funds will enable the McLean Institute to 1) support additional professional staff with expertise in community engagement and public service, 2) enhance its collaborative relationships with communities in Mississippi, and 3) provide operating capital so the McLean Institute can provide applied research opportunities for faculty and students. These resources will ensure that the McLean Institute is able to implement its mission to impact the University of Mississippi and the state well into the future.

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